

A MAN'S STRATAGEM.

BY GABRIEL LEE.

I WAS the eldest of the family, not particularly distinguished in any other way; least of all by the possession of personal beauty, for I was *petite* in figure, unremarkable in feature, and with a nose which even I was obliged to confess decidedly *retroussée* in tendency.

My mother, as far back as I could recollect, had always been an invalid, so that the care of the younger children, and the management of household affairs, had, in a great measure, devolved upon myself, as eldest daughter: consequently I had acquired a habit of contemplating affairs in general from a matronly point of view, which, contrasted with my youth, must have appeared sufficiently ludicrous. In consequence of her delicate state of health, I had always regarded my mother as a being to be lovingly cherished, and carefully preserved from the smallest annoyance; but my father called out the strongest feelings of my nature. He was a man of grave and stately presence, with the tenderest smile—he rarely laughed—which ever illumined a human face; when I add that he possessed a nature high-toned, chivalrous, and sensitive beyond words to the claim of weakness or misfortune, combined with a serene grace of manner that rarely failed him, you may well imagine that the ideal of manhood he inspired was of no mean order.

From constant association with so unusual a character, I had formed a disposition to regard those of the other sex near my own age as frivolous, and unworthy of anything but the merest civility, sometimes, I fear, scarcely that; and at this time Mr. Pitt would have found in me a decided opponent of his youthful assertion, that "it was no crime to be a young man." I made, however, one exception to this rule: it was in favor of the son of one of my father's life-long friends, whose name (the son's) had been a household word among us as far back as my memory extended.

Geoffrey Hamilton was about ten years older than I, but I felt myself at least a quarter of a century in advance of him, and would favor him with exordiums upon preserving his health, acquiring habits of self-control, in short, upon almost every conceivable subject, with the gravity of one who, having passed through

every vicissitude of life, feels called upon to give others the benefit of her experience. Geoffrey never resented this odd position of affairs in the least, his usual reply being a burst of joyous, cheery laughter, ringing out like a chime of sweet-toned bells, accompanied by a "That's your opinion, is it? Well, madam, I suppose I must abide by it."

One sunny morning in October, so bright and fair that one could hardly believe the summer past, I had thrown the windows open, and was engaged in my daily task of arranging the parlors, when I heard a step in the hall, and, looking up, saw Geoffrey, who, finding the street door ajar, had entered without the ceremony of ringing. "Good morning, lady fair," he said. I returned his greeting; and then, observing a trace of mud upon his boots, remarked, "Don't forget the mat, dear boy," in the tone that one reminds a forgetful child of its duty. He made use of the article in question, then came in and seated himself. He watched me as I gathered up scattered pieces of music and restored them to the stand, or placed in order refractory articles of furniture; then after awhile said, "I'll pledge my word, Miss Amy, that there isn't a speck of dust to be found anywhere; couldn't you sit down, therefore, without injury to your conscience, and give me your attention for a few moments?" The words struck me strangely; never had Geoffrey Hamilton, within my recollection, placed Miss before my name in familiar conversation. I mutely laid aside the duster, and ensconced myself in the depths of a spacious arm-chair, saying, "I'm ready, sir, for your communication." He looked at me with a face pale, determined, yet with a singularly rueful expression upon it, as if he were about to make a request, and suspected he would be snubbed for doing so. "Well, then," returned he, "as you gave me permission to speak, will you—that is—will you marry me?" I was petrified at such an astounding *denouement*, and sat gazing at him in a maze of bewilderment. At length my mind was made up, and I resolved, as much as possible, to make a jest of the whole affair. In pursuance with this plan, I assured him the idea was absurdly ludicrous; philosophically explained that he had been misled in

regard to his feelings; that it was friendship alone he felt for me, and concluded by remarking, "that at most it was a boyish fancy that would soon pass away." He had heard me patiently until the last clause of my speech; and then, rising, stood proud and indignant before me. "It seems I have been mistaken in one respect, at all events," he said, his sensitive mouth trembling. "I had scarcely thought you the woman to make a jest of honest love. I may be a boy in your eyes, but for all that I can feel as a man." I was subdued by the spirit which flashed from his eyes, and rejoined, in an altered tone, "At least, Geoffrey, let us be friends, and forget the only difference we have ever had." His face softened, he pressed my offered hand without a word, and left. I went to the piano, and, sitting down, attempted to perform a lively air; but presently something bright fell on the keys, and before I knew I found myself in tears. "Of course it was unpleasant to give the poor fellow so much pain," was the reason I assigned for this evidence of emotion.

It was some weeks after this before Geoffrey made his appearance in our family circle. He parried the attacks that were immediately made upon him in reference to his unusual absence, even little Bertil toddling up to him with a "Where you been all dis time?" with his usual gayety of manner saying he had been "on a voyage to the moon in company with Messrs. La Mountain and Wise," and forthwith proceeded to give a most humorous and ludicrous account of the manners and customs of the inhabitants of this luminary; those particulars being received with prolonged laughter by all but aforesaid little Bertil, who, gazing at the narrator with large, open eyes, child fashion, gravely pronounced him a "naughty, wicked tory-teller." As for me, when Geoffrey first made his appearance, much to my indignation, I found myself blushing in the most absurd manner imaginable; and when, in the course of the evening, he found occasion to whisper to me, "I want to have one of our old talks together," I became conscious of a singular feeling of embarrassment which certainly I had never experienced in his society before. He placed a chair for me in the recess of the bow window, and, seating himself beside me, remarked, "I am going to ask your advice;" then, in a voice slightly tremulous, added, "You know you refused me happiness in one direction, will you help me to it in another?" "As if you were my own brother," I rejoined, earnestly. Geoffrey winced a little, then, after a pause, went on, "You

know I am the most common-place matter-of-fact man that ever lived, (I knew nothing of the kind, but refrained from saying so,) for all that, I am going to tell you of the strangest bit of romance that has fallen in my way. You have often heard me speak of Mr. Chester, the eldest partner in our firm?" I nodded affirmation. "The other day he called me aside with an air of mystery, and opened his conversation in this astounding manner, 'Hamilton, you are probably aware I have a daughter.' 'I am not, sir.' He smiled, that peculiarly grim smile of his, then went on. 'Very few people are. I never meant they should be; for, years ago, when Beatrice, that's her name, was a tiny thing, not yet able to walk, my only other child—the rest had died, and she was the light of my eyes—eloped with a low adventurer, and I made a solemn oath that Beatrice should be secluded from all society, until she was old enough to marry, when I would choose her a husband. The time is come, if I don't make haste'—here his tone became intensely bitter—'she will be running off with my coachman likely,' then softening a little he went on, 'Geoffrey Hamilton, I like you, and you shall have her. What she is you shall see for yourself.' When I attempted a reply, he stopped me with, 'Not a word, my boy,' took me home to dinner, and here I am to ask your advice." "Of course," returned I, and a shade of sarcasm would mingle with my tones, "you saw her, loved her, and will be the lady's husband; the romance could surely have no fitter ending." "The first is true, but you are too hasty as to the rest. Remember I have always regarded your judgment as infallible. Ride out there with me to-morrow, there is a deep snow upon the ground and it will be splendid sleighing. Mr. Chester has refused to let me give him an answer under a fortnight; in the meantime I am at liberty to cultivate the acquaintance of my proposed bride. I wish you to see her, and by your decision I will abide." I could not refuse this request, and, with a bright face, he bid me good night, and went, saying, "Remember to-morrow."

I retired to rest in a strange frame of mind. My first feeling was that of indignation; you see, with all my matronly airs, I was exactly like other girls of my age. I was right then in thinking his liking for me was only a boyish fancy; and in the midst of this thought I found myself on the point of crying again. "Of course she is beautiful!" I ejaculated aloud, as, standing before the glass, I unloosed my unremarkable brown hair. And when I lay down to

sleep, all the night long in my dreams I saw a lovely face looking out from clouds, and smiling scornfully as often as its eyes met mine.

The next day I was in readiness, all but my bonnet and furs, when I heard the merry jingle of bells, and then Geoffrey came in. The moment I saw him he had no need to say, "The loveliest day in the world for a sleigh-ride," for his glowing face, and the sparkling light of his eyes, told of the brightness outside plainer than words. In spite of this, though, there was an anxious yet determined expression underlying the brightness which I had never seen in his face before; and I had occasion to know that face well, for, was there a memory of my childhood in which that cheery, ever-loving countenance did not play its part? He drew my furs closer, pulled up the buffalo robe until only my face peeped out, then drove away, laughing heartily at the appearance I made, the bells ringing out a gay accompaniment, as if they too enjoyed the joke. As we rode along, Geoffrey gave me additional particulars in reference to the singularities of his would-be father-in-law, Mr. Chester; said he had chosen the most solitary spot he could find for a home, furnished it in grand style, and there kept his daughter in the strictest seclusion. "She has been allowed no companions of her own age," said the narrator, "for fear of inspiring her with romantic ideas, and sees scarcely any one but her governess, of whom I caught a glimpse the day I was there, and she looked precise enough for a Spanish Duenna." "And is Beatrice very beautiful?" asked I. I had longed to make this inquiry the night before, but there had been a weight upon my tongue that prevented. A quick glance sped from Geoffrey's eyes into mine, and he answered, smiling softly, "You must judge for yourself." Was that tender smile consecrated to the memory of her loveliness? I asked myself. We made quick speed over the crisp, sparkling snow, neither of us talking much, until at length Geoffrey said, "We're there." I raised my head, and far in from the road saw a stately mansion enough. It was approachable only through a long avenue of great trees, which I saw when in foliage would render the house itself invisible to any one not familiar with its whereabouts. This was the more remarkable, as on all sides the country had been deprived of trees, and now lay before us one unbroken surface of white, a still sea of snow as far as the eye could reach. "I have no difficulty," said I, gaily, striving to suppress some inward agitation, "in imagining the fair lady I am to see as a Madam Miranda,

kept by Prospero in exile until fate throws a Prince Ferdinand in her way." As if to carry out my jest, the wide oaken carved doors swung back, and, in answer to our summons, a jet black negro presented himself, whose fine livery only made more conspicuous his grotesque ugliness of face and form. "Caliban," whispered I to my companion, as with an air of intense importance the negro waved his hand, saying, "You will find Miss Chester in the third room, sah." Geoffrey led the way into the apartment on her left. As we entered, what a change from the scene without! every remembrance of winter vanished; we moved in an air as soft as summer, laden with richest scents of flowers; while from the distance there was a thrilling and caroling as of many birds. We had come to see Miranda, but it was after she had married Ferdinand, and gone to reign with him in his kingdom, where she had furnished her palace in remembrance of the ocean home of her maidenhood, for on every side were suggestions of the sea. We moved over carpets more yielding than sea moss, upon whose veins of bluish-green were laid rose-tinted shells. The walls were also blue-green in hue, with lines of gleaming yellow, here and there, like sunlight on water; while, around the semi-translucent, emerald-tinted columns separating the rooms, carved sea-monsters writhed up to the ceiling. I followed Geoffrey, seeming to myself to be in a dream, which would be one of wondering pleasure, were it not for a nameless oppressive dread that overshadowed me. We seemed a long time passing through those two rooms, but at length we reached the third, which was much smaller than the others; and Miranda—I mean Beatrice—was before me. I stood mutely by, while she greeted Geoffrey, a mist across my eyes, as when in dreams we long to see but cannot; it cleared away, and she who stood before me impressed her image upon my mind with such vivid distinctness, that I have no choice but to remember until I die. A girl of sixteen, perhaps, with drifts of black hair lying in large, loose curls low upon her bosom, its rich plenitude caught up behind, and restrained by a net of tiny golden shells, and scarlet coral wrought into flowers; her dress of opaline silk, with sleeves falling open from the shoulder, revealed arms clasped by bracelets of great pearls an Oceanida would not have disdained to wear. In low, crystal-clear accents, this figure came forward and welcomed me; then I looked full into her face; and, rarely lovely as it was, I wish never to see such another. It was of clear white, without a tint of color except the lips, and they were of a

soft, rich pink; but it was not this that pained, it was the perfect stillness of expression that reigned dominant over the face; not serenity, or calm, simply stillness, as of one who had neither enjoyed nor suffered; to whom life, with its struggles, aspirations, hopes, was a thing unguessed of. She scarcely looked at Geoffrey; but, as unconcerned as a child, dropped the gaze of her liquid amber-brown eyes full upon me; then said, "It is very pleasant to see a young girl near my own age. I am very grateful to you for bringing her," she concluded, glancing at Geoffrey, who bowed. The burden of conversation fell upon this last; for I felt too awkward and bewildered to talk; and Beatrice, leaning upon her gleaming, pearl-encircled arm, replied to Geoffrey's remarks; but still looked at me, as if, being totally unacquainted with the genus young lady, she was determined to store her memory with every detail. Still I sat, conscious of a dull throbbing all over me, until, determined to bear this no longer, I intimated a wish to go. "Not yet," said Beatrice, pleadingly, and presently the door swung open, and the servant I had designated as Caliban entered, bearing a waiter heaped with purple and white grapes, strawberries, and peaches. Surely this was an enchanted castle. As I ate the strawberries handed me, I said to Beatrice, "This is indeed a luxury; I can scarcely believe it is almost the depths of winter." Her reply was a perplexed look; and it struck me that then, for the first time in her life, she imagined that there might be people to whom such things as these were not every-day affairs. "I should like, Miss Amy, to see the conservatory," said Geoffrey. Beatrice rose, opened a glass door at the end of the apartment; and following, in a moment we were in fairy land. What need to describe the flush of fragrance and gorgeous blooms that saluted us! while birds, in cages of gold and silver net, aroused at our entrance, began warbling an ever-varying melody: this was the mysterious music I had heard upon our first entrance. I thought of my own home, and life there seemed coarse and commonplace compared to the loveliness amid which this girl moved, and I could have cried out in very bitterness, "Geoffrey Hamilton, I know well the purpose for which you brought me here. To revenge my rejection by showing me what great good fortune had been showered upon you. Out upon your miserable farce of consulting my judgment, as if mortal man could resist the charms of this girl, the princess of such splendor!" But I was quiet. I said nothing, until Beatrice remarking carelessly, "You must have some flowers," in a

tone that seemed to intimate she made the offer from courtesy alone; for aught she knew I might have far finer in my own home; then when I saw her plucking costly exotics, as if they were commonest wild flowers, I murmured a remonstrance, whereat she again looked puzzled, and said, "Perhaps it would trouble you to carry too large a bouquet." It was plain that she had no better idea of the relative value of articles than an infant. When we parted from Beatrice, taking one of my hands in hers, she passed the other with a soft, caressing motion over it, saying, "You will come to see me a great many times more? I have a strange feeling that there are a great many things I have never thought of, and I am sure you could teach me." I muttered an indistinct reply. God help me! I couldn't but long to get away from her—Geoffrey Hamilton's bride that would be.

A few minutes afterward we were flying over the snow, and it was winter again. The aching pain in my heart, and the flowers I held under the buffaloes, that the cold air might not wither them, seeming to me the only tokens I had not dreamed. For awhile there was a silence, which Geoffrey broke by saying, hesitatingly, "I am waiting to hear what you think of her." "She is beautiful beyond words," returned I. "It cannot be denied," said my questioner, in slow, quiet tones. A feeling of despair took possession of me, and when he added, "Well, what more?" I broke forth with, "Certainly, what better can you do than marry her? Is she not as lovely as a fairy princess? What can a man ask more than beauty, wealth, youth? Marry her, of course; what better, indeed?" Sweet, tenderly low, spoke back that loving voice. "There is one thing better I can do—marry you, if you will have me." Was he scoffing? nay, I had no choice but to believe him; and, comparing my insignificant figure and unremarkable face with the thought of her we had left, woman like, I burst into hearty tears, amid which I managed to sob out, "I—I am not worthy." A firm arm clasped me close through the buffalo robe, and all, and that voice which had never been otherwise than kind, said, simply, "You are mine." The rest of the way I spent in crying, and a more thoroughly humbled little woman never alighted upon *terra firma* than was I, when Geoffrey, lifting me carefully out, deposited me upon the pavement. He came in, and my companion, seating himself beside me, said, "No more tears, little lady, if I can help it." I recovered myself presently, such a state of subjection being by no means natural to me; and, looking up, I said, "Confess, sir,

you took me with you to-day to impress upon me the fact, that if a certain damsel whom you had honored with your regards was devoid of taste, there might be others who were not so deficient?" Geoffrey smiled consciously; then said, with quiet dignity, "I wished the woman I loved to understand that mine was something more than boyish fancy, and that, in comparison with her love, all things else were dross." "But how could you give up that exquisite creature for me?" I may never forget the look that was bent upon me, as he replied, "To behold you is for me to see a fair vision of a fireside where joy and peace are forever present. Beatrice tells me of none of these. She might give me a palace; my little lady will make me a home." Thus the true heart I was unworthy of answered my question. "But," persisted I, "what will you say to Mr. Chester?" I dared not mention Beatrice; but he understood what was passing in my mind, and returned, "Bea-

trice was unconscious of her father's intention; and to Mr. Chester himself, I shall simply plead pre-engaged affections."

The new year is but lately born, as I write; and, looking forward, I see such a beautiful vision of happiness opening before me, that I scarcely dare look down it for very joy. With grateful heart I have received sweet tokens of remembrance from my loved ones; but, of them all, none is so dear to me as a certain ring I wear on my hand, whose fair, large diamond looks at me like a friendly eye, seeming to say, "I know I am only dear to you as the symbol of that ring which shall wind yet closer."

Shall I end joyfully here? or must I sadly hint that I saw Beatrice Chester yet once again lovelier than the roses of snow on her bosom—whiter than the white velvet that framed her face? Child, you have no need now of my poor teaching; the angels tell you all things better than I could ever do.

ANGEL SUSIE.

BY MARY AMES ATKINS.

"And a little child shall lead them."

A sound of suppressed grief filled, with a deep sense of sadness, a little room, whose sides, either way, one felt, by reaching out their arms, they could almost touch, and wondered if their fingers would really go through the narrow, solitary window, if they should judge the dimensions in that simple and easy manner.

A diminutive cot in one corner seemed to take by far too large a share of the little room, and left scant space for one to move in outside. The quilt was very white that lay upon the unpretending cot, but not whiter than the little arms that tossed painfully upon it.

"Is my darling better?" asked a watcher, noticing a momentary lull in the paroxysms of the little one.

"Mamma!" was uttered feebly in reply, while a pair of soft, baby eyes turned lovingly, yet reproachfully, upon the poor woman, whose eager gaze through blinding tears told a tale of despairing hope and culminating fear.

"Oh! Father," she cried, clasping her hands, and raising her streaming eyes to heaven, "give her peace!"

"You don't love me, mamma!" interrupted the sufferer.

"I do! I do!" and a gentle hand smoothed the tangled locks that lay like threads of sunshine on the pillow.

"But you let me ache, mamma!"

"God knows I would hinder it, if I could! She blames me when I would give my life to bring her peace and health!"

"Do you love your little Susie still?"

"Do I? So much, my precious child, that I cannot even measure it! My child!"

And the mother, in her agony, dared question a higher right than hers to that little being, whose spirit-wings were fast unfurling to bear it to the eternal shore away from her—from her. She seemed to see it all, as she gazed appalled into the picture.

"Don't, mamma, look that way, it frightens me! Look at me, pretty mamma! Smooth my hair, just as you did a moment ago!"

"I will. I will, darling," and the sore-hearted mother turned her gaze from the

gloomy future upon her little one, and, with a smile that mocked her hidden feelings, played with the golden threads again, and even tried to voice a tune that Susie, when well, had always claimed at night. But all efforts, at the last, died away in the gush of tears.

So often, in the drama of life, does melody give place to wailing!

"What makes you cry so? Do you feel worse because Susie does?"

"Yes, darling."

"Then do take all this pain away."

"If I could," thought the mother, feeling in that moment, perhaps more than ever before, how weak she was—how weak, when such a mighty will to do struggled within! "If I could," she repeated, in very helplessness.

And, in deep trouble, when wave after wave of despair rushes over the soul, who does not feel weak? Who does not see the need of a saving power we cannot behold, yet know exists?

And then, if but perfect trust is born, how narrow and easily spanned seems our bridge of sighs!

"You don't make me well! Nobody makes me well!" moaned Susie, again going into paroxysms of such intense suffering, that her mother's groans were almost as dreadful to hear.

"Will nothing help her?" sobbed the wretched mother.

"Yes," seemed to answer an inward sense.

"I know what you mean, but I cannot bear it," she cried, in reply, as if an audible and human tongue had spoken to her. "I cannot bear it!" and she cowered within herself.

The door opened to admit a neighbor, whose coarse air, mean dress, and horny hands, showed her to be an inch or two lower in the social scale than the poor mourner at the bedside. But how sweet her voice, as she asks,

"How is the little one?"

Tears, audible and endless, answered the speaker, who approached the bedside with steps silent as thought, and, laying her hand upon the bowed head, murmured,

"There is one who wounds to heal."

"But this my *all*," came through heavy sobs. "Think of the glorious rest in waiting for suffering Susie!"

"I shall be alone—all alone!"

And the grief-racked mother turned angrily from her comforter.

"Alone? Not so, not so! My child who left me twenty-five years ago, seems nearer to me now than when her earthly presence filled my house with joy."

And the horny hand, in its tender stroking of those damp locks, felt soft as the softest velvet.

"Can grief become thus tempered?" asked the young mother, lifting her eyes to those of her friend, wherein the light of faith burned clear and steadfast.

"He holds the mourner's heart in the hollow of his hand," was the reply.

"But my one ewe lamb!" pleaded the mother, who, the next moment, bending frantically over the little sufferer, cried, "My child! would God I could die for thee!"

The kind neighbor thought of the hard lot of the orphan. But she did not speak, for she knew how far beyond control were the feelings of the mourner, who could realize nothing, but that her one ewe lamb was soon to lie down sleeping in the fold of the eternal.

"Mamma," said Susie, suddenly becoming still, and free from pain, "mamma, tell papa I love him. Give him my cornelian heart, and ask him, when he feels like doing wicked things, to look at it, and think if Susie could see him then, she'd cry about it. Tell him, he must try to be good all the time, and not leave you alone so much!" And Susie paused, exhausted.

"Oh! child, child!" cried her mother, as if she would fain ward off the approach so near and dreadful.

"Take off my heart now, mamma, and let me put it in the little box papa made for it, when he gave it to me," resumed Susie, with greater effort, "and, oh! be sure to tell him all I said. Mamma, don't cry so! I am better now! And if I can, I will be your and his little angel there! And I will come back to you sometimes; I will; though you may not see me, mamma. I will come! I will come! Kiss me once more, mamma!"

"But maternal sense of loss will be no less," thought the poor mother, clinging anew to the little form.

Then came a groan—a struggle—a faint sigh. Then a sweet smile settled upon the tiny features, instead of the contortions of physical agony.

"Is my Susie gone?" whispered the poor mourner.

"He giveth his beloved sleep," replied the neighbor, who laid a friendly hand upon the form so still, and white, and beautiful.

"I will robe my darling for the grave," said the mother, gathering with superhuman effort strength for the office.

"You cannot stand it!"

"I must—no other hands must touch her!"

"How beautiful!" said Mrs. Findlaye, the kind neighbor, when all was done.

"She was always beautiful. If he should come in now, perhaps——"

"The prayer of the righteous availeth much."

"I do not know anything about them, Mrs. Findlaye! I only know that she was not saved to me!" interrupted the mourner, rising and pacing the floor.

"His steps are mysterious, yet, through all, merciful."

"Don't say merciful! It will drive me mad to hear you say that mercy made me childless!"

Mrs. Findlaye did not attempt an answer, but had instant resource to prayer, unspoken and deep. Then, she audibly invoked resignation and faith for the bereaved ones.

A heavy step on the entry below; its uncertain progress over the creaking stairs; a loud oath at the darkness now disturbed the feeling in the room of death.

The door opened.

"Charles!" With this the mourner threw herself upon the man's breast, and burst into fresh lamentations.

"What's the trouble now?" and he attempted to throw the light burden from him.

"Hush!" looked, rather than spoke, Mrs. Findlaye, pointing toward the silent child, no longer sensible of his affection or reproof.

"Susie asleep? Wake up, daughter! Papa has a paper of bonbons in his pocket for you; put your hand in and get it;" as he thus spoke, he walked toward the bed.

"How's this?" he asked, quickly, in a gentler voice, yet scarce comprehending the grief of his wife, or the silence of Susie.

"Oh! my husband! Our poor little——"

"Susie's not dead?" And, with a burst of grief, the half intoxicated man clasped the beautiful clay to his breast.

A cold and cheerless day was it, upon which Susie was carried to the grave.

"How lonely it is now!" said Charles, on the evening succeeding the funeral. He walked to the window and looked discontentedly up and down the street. His wife watched him with

dismal forebodings. His tender kindness the past three days had made her hope for better things.

"I think I'll go out a few moments," he added, in a hesitating tone, as if half-ashamed of his wish for a change.

"Don't go, Charles. Susie left a message for you. Shall I tell it now? I could not before."

"What is it?"

He was all tears and attention, as his wife had expected. She gave him Susie's parting gift and message. He was deeply affected, and promised to be all that the dear child had wished. He did really do better.

And this promising state of things lasted a fortnight. At the expiration of that time he returned to his wife, miserably intoxicated and abusive. He at last threw himself upon the bed, where he heavily slumbered; while his wife sobbed and moaned beside him.

The hours wore on until midnight drew near, and the light went out, leaving the room in darkness. At this juncture Charles awoke.

"Wife, where are you?"

"At the bedside."

"And weeping ready to kill yourself!"

The man's voice was sad indeed. A reaction was taking place.

"I wish I could die, Charles. I have nothing to live for."

"I do not wonder you say so, wife. You are fit to die; I am not, nor fit for anything else."

"If you would but do as well as you did for a spell."

"I am too weak to promise anything. Yet I wished to do right. But the first temptation overthrows me."

"If you would but think of Susie, you might keep from sinning, husband."

"Don't mention her pure name to me. I am not worthy of her love. I never was."

"Yet she loved you, and wanted you to do right."

"I wasn't worthy of her! I wasn't worthy of her!" the man cried, with a sudden return of his grief at the loss.

The room had been in darkness.

What was the strange light that now, from a pale glimmer, streamed all about the weeping parents? What was it? Ah!

"Husband!"

"Wife!"

And the pair clung to each other in trembling surprise, yet could not remove their eyes from the nearing vision of matchless beauty, that seemed floating in the centre of the strange light toward them.

It moved on, nearer, nearer, until it laid a thin hand on each parent. Its face was beautiful, pure, and tranquil. Its eyes beamed unutterable love and gentleness. Its wings were of transparent gold. Its vestments of azure cloud-stuff. It spoke, and its tones were sweeter than sound of earth.

"Parents, I promised to come to you if possible. Dear mother, be strong in faith; God is above you! Dear father, strive to do right. Will you promise Susie this? I am your Susie still. I love you, as of old. Dear father, will you promise?"

"I will."

A seraphic smile lighted the countenance of the vision. It touched its lips gently to the forehead of either parent, then vanished slowly away.

And from that hour Charles walked in the paths of righteousness, and found peace therein.

Who, having a dear one in heaven, will say there are not ministering spirits?

EYES.

BY EMILY HEWITT BUGBEE.

The flowers and the stars speak a moving language; but from the eye beams what will endure when fragrance and light are no more.

The eye speaks with an eloquence and a truthfulness surpassing speech. It is the window out of which the winged thoughts often fly unwillingly.—TUCKERMAN.

The angels that inhabit this temple of the body appear at the windows.—EMERSON.

I CAN see no special reason why I may not devote a chapter exclusively to Eyes, since they are at once the principal and striking feature of the face; principal, because it is to them we direct our gaze, our smiles, our words; striking, because they possess the power to fascinate and electrify. Who ever fell in love with a nose?—who ever felt his heart smote by a chin?—it is the Eye, sir, the Eye, madam, that swallows up all time in a single glance!

I am in the country at the time of this writing, in the little seven by nine library, to which my aunt Jane has pleasantly consigned me; where no sound comes save the bay of a hound, and the occasional crack of a rifle from the distant smoke-veiled forests; and where, by inclining my unworthy head to the window, I see a broad autumnal landscape lying asleep in the rich sunshine, and watched by the kindly sky. Perhaps it was its blue that set me thinking of the subject of this present discourse; perhaps it was this pleasant silence that has turned my thoughts backward, rambling and dreaming over the days ago—over the visions, the voices, the glances which the waves of Fate have drifted from me—or drifted me from them, or both! Eyes, was it? Thank you for recalling me!

The first eyes "worthy of note"—as the reporter of the U. S. A. F. says—are those glimmering, dimming, shimmering, gray-blue orbs, wherein we see sunshine and shadow, and all manner of flitting fancies, chasing each other round the never-ending circle. Shade them with dark fringes and they are often taken for black eyes. They are the best kind of eyes for flirtation, and the person who sports them is *bon compagnon* for any one.

There is your common blue eye, from which screen me—not because they are so common, (because violets are common, and we love them still,) but because they are so perpetually dead! so same! Be they gazing on Niagara or Mont Blanc, a fresh rose or a beautiful face—be they reflecting the lamps of a festival, or looking down upon a prosy breakfast-table—reading the

carnival at Rome, or the agricultural department in the Herald, they are the same calm, unconscious, automatonical eyes, fixed stars! neither lightening nor darkening at anything. These are the eyes that "take in" your dress, if you are in trouble and perplexity, their composed stare only irritates you the more; if your spirits rise and run over in the form of sallies, jokes, and absurd little fancies, they open upon you in stupid wonder, "and remain entrenched in the fortress of material propriety." They are the worst eyes in the world to get along with. You must adapt yourself to their level sobriety, or else there must be silence in the stage-coach.

There is the common black eye which you meet every day, roguish, merry, and pretty; generally accompanied by a quick, vivacious, and spunky nature—such eyes as we instinctively lift ours to for ready sympathy, when anything ludicrous occurs. I have seen many and many such eyes! brave and hopeful, and bound to make the best of everything are they: and they shed the fewest tears of all.

There is the hazel eye, and I am honest when I say that I never, never met—among all the eyes that I have seen—but *one* pair of real, actual hazel eyes—the greenish, gray eyes! They were on the cars, allied to golden brown hair, and, as my memory deepens to details, a resolute, yet *nonchalant* mouth, a gray dress with a collar like snow, nice gloves, and a coquettish little basket. Happy hazel eyes! may the world have gone well with *you*!

There is the yellowish-brown eye, which bores look through, and which nobody likes! the peering, malicious eyes, which are always turning up in most unexpected places—which are always finding your loose letters—which are always looking over your shoulder under pretence of watching something through the window. They are your tale-bearers, importers of mischief, and wholesale dealers in the affairs of other people.

There is the steel-blue eye which I love, and

love to love, hard as their name sounds. I have seen but few of them; perhaps half a dozen cases have come under or over my observation; for they are always high up, glittering and flashing. They remind one of a bit of summer sky, with a bright star in it, or a sunset ray quivering upon the waves. They are the "blue and gold" editions of eyes, full of life, fire, eloquence, and soul! Now fixed in some dreamy fancy, placid and serene, like still waters glimmering through peaceful groves; and now awakening, blazing, and flashing, like those same blue waters rolled into waves by the gale, and tipped with glittering fire by the sun. Blessed, eagle eyes! high and true as heaven; warm and bright with the blaze of life and truth. I saw them years ago dreaming over a trout stream among the "Verde Monts;" I saw them last night pouring their fire into the hearts of a little audience collected in the little court-house of Caledonia, Minn.; once at Minnehaha; once in the human tide of Broadway; once at the sea-side, and may meet them again!

Lastly, there are the rare, mysterious, velvety-black eyes, which Leland calls "fluid souls in mourning;" and Heine sings of

"A dark eye
Like a sun of jet black fire."

And of "Hedwig," whose eyes were
"Like stars in a dark Heaven."

Sad, beautiful, tormenting eyes! Once seen, they haunt you forever with their bewildering abysses of wordless thought; their deep, silent prayers, like a wronged soul looking forth from its prison bars, patiently suffering its bondage, and still looking and yearning for freedom. I have thought that there are no mates for such eyes, they are so deeply, sadly, inapproachably alone!

Apropos, I have a legend of my own—one which came to me in dreams—of a great, high angel who sinned, and into whose eyes God looked with a mournful sternness, until they grew dark with hopeless despair, and the angel was sent down to earth, doomed to wander here eternally—passing from prison to prison through generations, centuries, and all time—ever wandering, ever in bondage, and ever looking out sadly and yearningly upon the world.

Perchance those wondrous orbs, which you met in the street, are the same that, centuries and centuries ago, gleamed under the dusky forehead of Italy, or looked out upon the endless twilight of the dreary Northland. It may be but a new prison for the wandering angel.

HOW GODFREY HORTON CHOSE HIS WIFE.

BY MARY E. CLARKE.

"GODFREY, old boy," said Henry Clayton, as he tilted back his chair, and put his feet upon the mantelpiece, "when is the wedding to be?"

"Whose wedding?"

"Miss Laura Somers, or Jenny, which is it?"

"I do not know, I am sure."

"Now don't be mysterious, Godfrey; you know you are a most constant visitor, and all 'our set' are talking about the match. Don't pretend you have not selected one of the sisters."

"How do you know either of them will have me?"

"Don't be absurd, old boy. You, young, handsome, talented, and with a large fortune, need not be over bashful. Come, be frank, which is the favorite sister?"

"Well, frankly then, Henry, I cannot tell you. I have visited the family for several months, as you know, but I cannot decide. Laura is certainly the handsomest, with her flashing black eyes and queenly manner; but Jenny seems, although the youngest, to be the most womanly and useful of the two. Yet, I cannot be sure of that. My entrance is the signal for cordial welcome and smiles, and, let me call at what hour I will, they are always well dressed, and apparently disengaged. To be sure I always, in the morning, have to wait some time before Laura is visible."

"Pop in unexpectedly and notice the internal economy."

"How can I? A card at the door will put any lady on her guard, or even the notice of a gentleman visitor."

"Go there in disguise. As a washerwoman, for instance."

"Good! I will!"

"Go there as a washerwoman?" cried Clayton.

"Not exactly, but I will obtain admittance to a morning's privacy."

"Well, let me know the result."

Laura and Jenny Somers were the only children of a widower; who, although in moderate circumstances, moved in very fashionable society. At the period of my short sketch, he was about to supply the lamented Mrs. Somers' place, after nearly ten years' mourning, and, although a kind, indulgent parent, had no ob-

jection to his daughters' marriage, and, indeed, had told them so. Laura, whose high spirit resented the probable supremacy of a step-mother, had already selected Godfrey Horton as her future husband; and Fanny, who was younger and gentler in spirit, tried to conquer a carefully concealed preference for the same purpose. All his attentions were ascribed, by her, to a brotherly regard, though every act of kindness or courtesy touched her very heart.

It was the morning after a large ball, and the sisters were in the breakfast room together. Laura, her glossy black hair pushed negligently off her face, with the rough tumbled braids of last evening's elaborate coiffure gathered loosely into a comb; wearing a soiled wrapper, torn stockings, and presenting rather an alarming contrast to the brilliant ball-room belle, was lounging on a sofa. Jenny, in a neat morning dress, with a large gingham apron, little white collar, and hair smoothly brushed into a neat knot, was washing the breakfast dishes.

"There is an old man at the door with some artificial flowers," said the servant, opening the dining-room door, "will you see him?"

"No," said Jenny.

"Yes," cried Laura, "send him up."

The servant departed to obey the last order.

In a few moments the old man came in. He was poorly clad, with a coarse blue cloak, which was much too large for him. His hair was white, and he wore a beard and moustache of the same snowy hue. Making a low bow, he placed the large basket he carried on a table, and opened it.

"I have a bunch of blue flowers here," he said, taking them from the basket, "that will just suit your golden hair, Miss," and he held them before Jenny.

"It was my sister who wished to look at your flowers," said Fanny, quietly.

"Yes, bring them here," was Laura's imperious command.

The old man's eyes followed Jenny, as she washed, wiped, and put away the dishes, swept the room, and dusted it, and then sat down beside Laura, who was still looking over the basket.

"See, Jenny, this scarlet bunch. Will it not

be lovely with a few dark leaves to wear with my new silk?"

"But," whispered Jenny, "you can't afford it just now."

"Yes, I can. Father gave me some money yesterday."

"To pay the last dry goods bill."

"Well, I can have that carried to my private account."

"Oh! Laura, I hate to hear you talk of that private account. It seems so much like cheating father."

"Nonsense! It will stand till I am married, and then I can easily save it out of my house-keeping money."

"I should not wish to marry in debt," said Jenny.

The old pedlar looked earnestly at the sisters.

"You had better take this blue bunch, Miss," he said to Jenny. "If it ain't convenient to pay for it now, I will call again."

"No, I shall not take them."

"They are very becoming, Miss. Look in this glass."

They were becoming, mixing with the glossy golden hair, and setting off Jenny's dazzling complexion.

"I wish my hair was light," said Laura. "I should like to wear blue. Godfrey Horton said, last night, that forget-me-nots were his favorite flowers."

Jenny colored, and, placing the bunch again in the basket, said,

"Come, Laura, decide. You are keeping one waiting whose time, probably, is valuable," then, passing a chair, she added, "Be seated, sir, you look tired."

"I am tired, indeed," was the reply.

"I will take the scarlet bunch, and these red camellias, and this white cluster," said Laura.

"But, sister, you cannot afford it."

"Yes, I can. Godfrey Horton is rich."

The old man bit his lip.

"Think," said Jenny, in a low tone, "if you love him, how much it will grieve him if he should discover this deceit."

"Nonsense! Well, I'll tell you how to remedy it. Lend me some money out of the housekeeping funds."

"So," thought the old man, "*she* is house-keeper. Miss Laura always gave me to understand that that was her post."

"Laura! Steal from my father!"

"Then don't preach."

"Miss Jenny," said a servant, entering at that moment, "the dinner has come."

Jenny left the room, and Laura still turned over the gay flowers, while the old man pointed out their various beauties, his eye, in the meantime, running over the disordered hair, shabby dress, and lazy position, whilst he mentally contrasted them with Jenny's neat attire.

"Not decided yet?" said Jenny, returning after a short absence.

"No. Come here."

"I can't! Father has sent home a calf's head, and I am afraid to trust it entirely to Margaret. I must superintend the dinner, make a pudding, and the parlors must be dusted, and there is my white mulle to be finished."

"Before I would be the drudge you are!" cried Laura.

"Drudge! nonsense! I have plenty of time left for enjoyment, and father cannot have a comfortable house, if some one does not superintend these things. When I marry you may do it," and she laughed merrily.

"As if I should not marry first!" said Laura.

"There, I have chosen all I want."

"Shall I call again for the change?" said the pedlar. "I shall be happy to put the Misses Somers on my list of customers."

"Yes, call again."

So the pedlar took up his basket, walked home, threw aside his wig, beard, and disguise, and wrote an offer of his hand and heart to Miss Virginia Somers, which was accepted.

Laura Somers has two sources of profound speculation: One is, "Why did Godfrey Horton propose to Jenny instead of me?" The other, "I wonder why that old man never called to be paid for those exquisite flowers?"

MARRYING AN AUTHORESS.

BY MARY E. CLARKE.

"WELL!" cried Horace Lovering, entering his aunt's parlor, one evening, "well! if I ever marry a literary woman, you may imprison me for a lunatic!"

"Why, Horace!" said his cousin Jessie, looking up from her knitting, "what is the matter? Good evening!"

"Oh! I beg your pardon; my entrance was rather abrupt. Good evening, both of you."

"What has put such a sudden aversion to literary women into your mind? You were always an advocate of education and cultivation for our sex, as well as for that of your own."

"Certainly! I admit it. I always admired talented women, fully approved of their cultivating and using their talents; but oh! this evening ends my dream. I will never, never fall in love with, or marry, a literary woman. I see, Jessie, you want to know all about it. Do you remember Cora Smith?"

"Your old sweetheart?"

"My—well, yes, I did admire Cora, that's a fact, she was so meek and pretty, dressed so exquisitely, conversed so beautifully upon the domestic duties of women, and seemed, in spite of her brilliant intellect, so gentle and so womanly. I admired both herself, and the writings to which she signed her name, and which we used, Jessie, to look for so eagerly in the magazines. Her book, too, was a perfect gem. Well! well! let that pass. She went to Europe after her marriage, as you know; and, although it is six months since she returned, this is the first evening I have had to call upon her. Oh! Jessie."

"I know," said Jessie, laughing, "dust an inch thick. Cora in a calico wrapper, the worse for wear and dirt. Frank driven away from home by confusion and neglect, or else asleep on the sofa; every article of furniture in the wrong place——"

"And Mrs. Smith correcting proof in the front parlor. Jessie! does that woman own a brush and comb?"

"I doubt it," said Mrs. Lovering, Jessie's mother, joining in the conversation; "if she owns them, I am sure they lead an easy, idle life."

"So I say again, auntie," said Horace, "never, never, never will I marry an authoress."

"Is it quite fair to take it for granted that all literary women are like Cora Smith?"

"Why, auntie, think how beautifully she wrote, and conversed about woman's home duties and responsibilities. I thought if ever there lived a true, *womanly* woman, it was Mrs. Smith."

"I shouldn't wonder if you married a strong-minded, woman's rights, authoress, after all," said Jessie.

"Never! I had rather marry a complete fool! Not give me a girl of quiet domestic taste, natural manners, and good, sound, common sense, in preference to any brilliant genius, who 'soars above the vulgar common places of life,' as I was informed this evening all *true* genius did."

"You'll return to your old faith."

"I will never marry an authoress!"

"Perhaps!"

"I never will! Come now, Jessie, don't be provoking."

"Two years from now, you will be figuring as the distinguished Mrs. Lovering's husband."

"Two years from now? Come, we'll see, I am glad you set a limit to the time. I will wager a diamond ring, against one of these new style smoking-caps I admire so much, that you are mistaken!"

"Done! Mother is a witness!"

"Well, we will see. When do you go to Oak Grove, auntie?"

"Next week. You will come over soon, Horace?"

"To spend my usual month? Let me see! This is the last week in May. I will join you the second week in June."

"I'll have a house full of literary women to meet you," said Jessie.

"I defy you. Fill the house, if you will! I am impenetrable! Come, Jessie, put away that everlasting knitting and play for me! Here! this pot pourri from Martha."

It was the second week in June. Upon the porch of the pretty cottage where Jessie and her mother spent the summer months, stood two young girls, Jessie, and a tiny, blue-eyed blonde, who clung to her friend in a pretty, caressing, child-like manner.

"What does this pet cousin of yours look like, Jessie?" inquired her friend, Annie Atherton.

"Tall! Brown hair, dark eyes, fierce moustache, and an easy, graceful carriage. He is a whole-souled, noble, manly fellow, Annie. Ah! there's the carriage!" and, two minutes later, Jessie was welcoming her cousin. Annie glided away into the house.

"Jessie," said Horace, the moment the young lady was out of sight, "who is that exquisite little fairy?"

"Annie Atherton, a— a friend of mine."

"Any relation to a certain George Atherton, now in California?" inquired Horace, trying not to look significant.

"His sister," and Jessie blushed prettily. "Don't tease me, Horace."

"I won't upon one condition."

"Name it."

"Introduce me to your friend immediately."

"Come in then. She is probably in the parlor with mother."

She was in the parlor, nestled down on a sofa, in a pretty, graceful attitude, her cheek resting on the palm of a tiny white hand, and her white dress just showing a glimpse of the daintiest little slipper imaginable. She rose when the cousins entered and acknowledged Horace's bow.

"Your mother is lying down," she said to Jessie; "she said her head ached slightly."

"I will go to her," said Jessie, quickly.

Horace took a chair near the sofa, as Annie sank back into her old position, and they opened a conversation. An hour, two hours passed away, and they were still in the parlor chatting, when Jessie summoned them to tea.

"Mother will not come down again this evening," said Jessie, leading the way to the dining-room; "her head still aches, though not quite so badly as it did when I went up to her."

"Can I do anything for her?" said Annie.

"Nothing for her; but you may take care of Horace this evening, and let me sit up stairs."

Neither Annie nor Horace looked miserable as this suggestion was made.

It was the third week in June. Horace and Jessie stood in the porch. The sun was just rising, and the cousins were the only ones astir in the house. Mrs. Lovering, quite recovered, was still sleeping, when Jessie left her side, and went down stairs.

"Up so early, Horace?" was her greeting.

"Oh! I always walk before breakfast, when I am in the country. Sit down, Jessie, let's have a little chat."

There was a long pause. Perfect silence reigned in the porch. At last Horace spoke,

"Jessie!"

"Well?"

"Jessie, I am in love! Hush! don't interrupt me, I want to make a clean breast of it. I am in love with that fascinating little fairy, Annie Atherton. Such wit, such intelligence, and, with it all, such child-like simplicity. Ah! Jessie! there's a girl worth fifty of your strong-minded, literary women. You never hear Annie Atherton preaching about woman's duties; yet your mother says she keeps house for her brother, who is a widower, and is a model of neatness and order. She never delivers long-winded sermons upon the education of children, but is a second mother to her three little nieces.

"Stop! stop, Horace! I know all her perfections!"

"And you will help me, Jessie, to win her?"

"There's gratitude!" cried Jessie, despairingly. "For one whole week have I pleaded headache, household cares, letters to write, and fifty other fibs, to leave you and Annie *toto-a-toto* for walks, drives, music, and conversation: and now, after all my exertions, you modestly request my assistance!"

"Now, Jessie, don't look so disgusted! Hark!"

Rivaling the birds, whose music filled the air around the house, a clear, sweet voice caroled at an upper window. It was a voice that could only accompany a sensitive, loving disposition; a pure, thrilling voice, that threw forth music easily and naturally, as if merely breathing the echoes of joyous feeling.

"Come down, Annie!" cried Jessie.

"In a minute! I made a rent in my blue lawn a yard long, yesterday. Punishment, stay up stairs this morning till it is mended. Oh! Jessie, we had such a splendid time yesterday. We went to the old mill you told me about, and sat near the water on the stones, chased each

other over the rocks, till, but for your cousin's strong arm, I should have fallen into the brook. We made wreaths of wild flowers, and—there, my dress is mended, I am coming down."

"Is she not deliciously natural and child-like?" whispered Horace.

A shower of roses thrown from the window made him look up, but Annie was already on her way down stairs.

"Good morning, Mr. Lovering! I had no idea till I gave Jessie her roses, that you were listening to my nonsense. We did have a nice time, though, didn't we?"

"Yes, indeed; and the cakes and pies made by those dainty fingers, as Jessie tells me, did not deserve to be omitted in your catalogue of enjoyments."

"Annie is quite famous for her cooking, as well as housekeeping talents," said Jessie.

"Nonsense!" said Annie, blushing. "Come, Jessie, we have time for a walk before breakfast."

"I am sorry that the biscuit require my eyes, as well as Hannah's fingers," said Jessie, glancing mischievously at Horace: "but don't let me keep you here. Horace will show you my pet spot down in the grove:" and aside to Horace she added, "a most delicious spot for sentimental folks."

"Did you walk there often when George was here?" inquired Annie, innocently.

This effectually drove Jessie from the field, and, darting into the house, she left Horace to do the honors of the place.

It was the third week in July, the fourth; August came, yet Horace Lovering and Annie Atherton were still at Oak Grove.

Late one afternoon, Annie, coming from a long ride, opened Jessie's door very softly and stole in quietly. Jessie, seated near the window, looked up, and, after one loving look into the young girl's face, she opened her arms, saying,

"My little sister!"

"You know," whispered Annie, "what Horace said to-day?"

"I know what he meant to ask you. You are his own now. I am very glad."

It was evening. Upon the sofa, in the parlor, with only the moon's rays to lighten the room, Horace Lovering sat, silently happy, for, nestled against his broad chest, with his strong arm folding her closely, was the little fairy, whose child-like loveliness and grace had won all the love of his manly heart.

Jessie, a wicked smile upon her face, stepped in from the porch through the window.

"Horace! here's the last number of Peterson. There is another sketch by C. C."

"I'll read it to-morrow. Did you read her book, Jessie?"

"Yes, it is as exquisite a gem as you described. By-the-way, Horace, I must introduce you to the authoress."

"No, I thank you. I prefer to keep up my admiration. At present I believe in her, an interview might destroy all my illusions."

"You refuse an introduction. That is not fair. You owe me a chance to win my wager; remember our compact."

"I defy you! Here is my talisman against all the charms of C. C."

"Oh! Horace! Horace! Give me my diamond ring, and own yourself beaten!"

"Beaten?"

"Fairly beaten, for you have your arms around C. C. at this moment; and oh! cousin Horace, I am dreadfully afraid you are going to lose your wager by——"

"Marrying an authoress!" cried Horace. "I will pay the wager, Jessie, and admit that a woman may be gentle, loving, domestic, and fitted for all the highest offices within her proper sphere, and yet be an authoress." And he drew Annie closer to his side.

MARTIN SOUTHGATE AND HIS HOPE.

BY FRANK LEE BENEDICT.

I WONDER if the people who read novels and grow sentimental over poetry, ever think how all these things are written. I believe the general impression is that books are concocted for the pleasure of writing them; that the authors thereof are a visionary race who have no real trouble, make no actual exertion in producing their works, and that, on the whole, it is as pleasurable an occupation as reading the pages and as easy as *criticizing* them.

I wish devoutly that the persons who talk about the happiness of a literary life might try it. I should like the young ladies, fresh from the inspiration of boarding-school studies, who write broken-hearted sonnets on superfine note paper, tied together with blue ribbons, and sent for publication—"not for the purpose of coining gold, but to obtain that for which the imaginative nature pines, spirit-sympathy and heart-companionship"—to see the women who have really made writing a business. I think that the three babies squalling at once, the complaining husband who always tears off his shirt buttons and grumbles incessantly at his wife, though he does not hesitate to live upon her earnings, might possibly cure them of their heaven-soaring dreams; convince their delicate sensibilities that insano folly is no proof of genius, that nervousness and irritability are not poetry, and that, on the whole, they had better settle down into what the Lord intended them for—tolerably sensible girls, and reasonably obedient daughters.

Martin Southgate was a literary man, in the fullest and dreariest meaning of the term, for his pen was his only means of obtaining a subsistence, and he lived, or rather did not exactly starve, upon its earnings.

He was a young man still, not more than thirty, and for ten dreary years he had followed that course of drudgery, more wearing to body and soul than the rounds of a tread-mill!

Life had not begun thus with him. At eighteen he had been an impulsive, imaginative boy, with a perfect treasury of hopes and dreams, and running through the whole, a vein of poetical genius, which, under kindlier auspices, might have yielded a product of pure golden ore. He had not been brought up to

any regular business, nor could he be induced to study a profession. His father was a man possessed of wealth, and a large family of sons and daughters had been reared in the idle, expensive manner which characterizes the bringing up of children in these latter days of our republic.

Martin had gone through college after a fashion, attaining honors, not so much from hard labor as from the ease with which he mastered any study which pleased him. Languages he liked, and consequently excelled in them; but as for mathematics, I seriously doubt if he could have gone through the multiplication table without halting, although he managed to pass very creditable examinations, thanks to the loose sleeves of his college robe, which concealed the problems hieroglyphed on the wristbands of his shirts.

He began his university course at fourteen—nothing unusual in this land of precocious genius—and at seventeen he left before the term for graduating. Then came the trip to Europe, indispensable now-a-days to the completion of any young man's education, and Martin made all the progress which could have been expected, from the precocity of his intellect, and the perseverance which characterized him in any favorite pursuit, especially pleasure.

He learned to speak French with ease and grace, and Mademoiselle Zephyrine, of the Grand Opera, sported an unusual amount of rich jewelry. I do not account for the coincidence; there is no reason why I should grow scandalous as well as garrulous in my declining years. Martin made the grand tour in the most approved style, and the delightful air of Florence and Naples improved his complexion as much as their society benefited his morals—no, manners!

But, after all, there was something better in the youth than in most of his associates. There were intervals when he tore himself from the dissipated world around, and really benefited heart and soul by his wanderings amid those regions of the past. He read and wrote a great deal, and his poems were praised to his heart's content, and in some solitary moments he felt that God had given him powers that ought not

to be frittered away in the aimless existence which he was leading.

An unexpected summons brought him back to America: his father had died suddenly, and he was forced to hurry home. I was wrong to use the word, for he no longer had one. Like many men reputed wealthy, Mr. Southgate had for years lived beyond his income, and indulged in speculations, which, after his death, showed him to be a ruined man.

A trifle was saved from the wreck for the wife and younger children; but Martin was only a step-son, and cordially reciprocated his second mother's dislikes, so he allowed her to take what there was, and the two parted: she seeking a home with her relatives in the South; and Martin setting out in the world for himself.

There is a volume of meaning in that phrase! To the young, full of bright anticipation; to the old and successful, a feeling of triumph at the dangers passed, of heart-ache at the hopes and feelings left behind; and to those struggling on through the darkness, replete with mockery and pain.

So Martin set out in the world; not for a moment sinking down, as many a youth, wearied like him, would have done, but determined to win for himself wealth and position. He adopted a literary career, of course, and, by way of commencement, prepared to publish a volume of poems.

He tried several publishers, but they scouted the idea. Some laughed in his face, and others treated him as a sort of lunatic; but this only roused Martin's obstinacy, and he determined to succeed in spite of them all. He found a man at last who was willing to take the poems, provided Southgate paid the expenses of getting them up, which he agreed to do, although it went hard with him to raise the necessary sum, and left him almost penniless when done. But the book was published. Martin had read the proof sheets, lingered lovingly over every line, and now he actually held in his hand a copy of his work, and on the table lay the newspaper containing the announcement of its publication.

That was the last advertisement Martin ever saw; for of course the publisher did nothing but print the book and pocket his money. Several papers noticed the poems favorably; then they fell dead, as many another such volume has done, and Martin was no nearer fame than before.

But one thing—before the winter was over he was dinnerless several times, and that is neither poetical nor pleasant. Something of course

must be done, but it seemed very difficult to find any way of doing it. He took poems to several of the literary journals, whose editors boasted of their fostering care of genius, and pointed to one and another rising stars at whose first glimmerings they had assisted. But the patrons of genius snubbed him and his creations, until Martin was ready to plunge the unlucky verses into the fire, and throw himself out of the window.

At last he found the editor of a new publication who was willing to treat with him, but not for poetry—the powers forefend! Of course, Martin hated prose, all newly fledged authorlings have a supreme contempt for it; but our young genius found himself obliged to curb the flight of his fancy, and come down to writing stories, essays, anything and everything that his employer pleased, and for such sums as he could get.

So he lived for a time, how, heaven knows, for I don't; though many an author, who is now famous, perhaps, might, and then the establishment burst and the periodical vanished into thin air, and Martin was destitute again. Luckily his Bohemian mode of life brought him into contact with all sorts of people, and he met a rising actress, who desired also to be considered a literary star, and she bought and actually paid—remarkable woman—for Martin's poetry, which she published under her own name, with unbounded applause; being an actress wise in her day and generation.

First one kind of employment, then another; at one time our hero served as a "Dramatic Critic" for a morning paper, and raced each evening from one theatre to another till midnight, wrote his article after, took it to the office before daylight, and all for the magnificent stipend of three dollars per week. Once I have heard it whispered that he employed his poetic genius in producing those stupendous rhymes which celebrate the wonders of cheap clothing stores—New Year's addresses were quite in his way, and he wrote periods and puffs of every earthly thing, from quack medicines to French sugar candies.

So he rose gradually—do not smile, romantic young lady, reading this sketch, when you ought to be sewing on your father's vest-buttons—do not turn away in disgust, Byronically miserable youth, counting your halting rhymes upon your useless fingers—I employ the term advisedly. This habit of writing anything and all things, throwing them off at a moment's notice, yet giving them a finished look, taught him a force and ease which it would have taken him years

to acquire in any other way, together with a grace in which amateur compositions are usually sadly wanting.

Before his strength and youthful vigor were worn out, and all his early dreams crushed, there came a change. Martin found a young clergyman, with many enthusiastic female admirers, for he was angelic in his surplice, and our poet supplied the material which raised him to eminence. In truth, Martin succeeded admirably; the sermons were better than anything he had ever written, and the crowds of stricken souls who flocked to the church, gained an immense deal of consolation from the eloquent language of our young Bohemian, as delivered by their rector. Now the clergyman was not a bad man in his way, only very weak, and out of his large salary he paid Martin well, and introduced him to notice, so that he procured an engagement in a first-class magazine, and began to be favorably known as a writer.

Of course, about that time, he must commit an egregious folly—he married. I hold that a matrimonial appendage is only an added vexation to any young author, but when besides being a wife she is also a fool, the poor fellow, who is her other half, is badly enough off.

Now Martin's Eve was a fool of the very worst and most incurable class, for she had a trifle of brains at the bottom of her folly, and for such there is no more hope than for a woman attacked by an ism.

But the girl was very pretty, and Martin mistook a mere fancy for love, and so laid what he believed to be his heart at her feet, and she pleased with the verses he wrote her, flattered by the newspaper notices he received, accepted his hand, when he offered it, for the very reason that nine-tenths of the young ladies marry, because she was asked, and because in feminine creed matrimony is the aim and end of woman's destiny.

So those two were married! The gilding wore off the chain of life as quickly as off pinchback jewelry, and left bare the galling links which each must drag on as best they could. After a little they kept house, for Martin wished to have a home, and he had it, such as it was. His wife knew as much of household duties as a camelia does of a vegetable garden, so the young husband went through that pleasant torture—life in an ill-regulated family.

Bessie fretted, and moaned, and dawdled about, and Martin did the best he could, as far as providing for the house went, but by the time they had been married a twelvemonth he was seldom in it, and there was every probability of

his sinking to the level of so many of his profession.

But there came an angel into that wretched house—a little daughter was born to them, and in the baby-delight he felt, Martin Southgate was for a season like another man.

He called her Hope—she was indeed the last one whereto his heart could cling! He tended her, cared for her, and Bessie did as well as her helpless nature would permit. Two years after, another girl was given to them, but she was never the same to Martin Southgate's heart. She was like her mother, and was her pet, so they all went on as well as could be expected.

To think of providing for his little family with the proceeds of story writing, would have been about as practicable as feeding strong men on rose-leaves, so with another pang, Martin yielded up his last dream. He had forsaken poetry long before, but it was very hard to let go the final link that connected him with the beautiful imaginings of the past.

But in spite of his follies and weaknesses—not as intolerable as those of most of his profession—he put his romances in the fire, and went boldly to work as assistant editor of a daily paper. If any of my readers wish to know how a soul in purgatory looks, let them seek out the working editor of a daily newspaper who was once a man of refined and poetical mind!

But Martin drudged and supported the helpless ones depending upon him, as well as he could, and so the seasons drifted slowly on, and bore him away from his youth.

Hope was eight years old on her father's thirtieth birth-day, a pale, clear-eyed child, not pretty like little Bessie, but infinitely more interesting with her quaint, womanly ways and original speeches.

"Haven't you worked enough for to-night, papa?" she whispered, from her little stool at his feet, as he paused for a moment in his task.

"I have never worked enough, little one," he replied, drearily.

"But just to-night, you know!"

"For my Hope's birth-day—it ought to be a time of rest to be sure."

"But it is your's too—we ought to keep it, oughtn't we, mamma?"

"Nothing is ever done in this house that ought to be," she replied, fretfully, leaning back in her chair, already a jaded, peevish looking woman, with scarcely a trace of good looks left. "I am sure nobody would think of my birth-day if I lived a hundred years."

"Oh, yes, indeed, mamma, you know I remembered it last time, and I have papa's, too!"

She laid her little gift on the table—only a pen-wiper, but so prettily and fancifully put together, that it was quite a study.

"And it is part Bessie's, too," said Hope, when her father kissed and thanked her; "she couldn't help me much, but she did her best."

So Bessie was kissed also, and Hope whispered her father to kiss mamma likewise, and he obeyed—but there was no longer passion in those caresses—either of them might as well have flattened their noses against the mantle-piece!

"And now we will have a nice good evening," said Hope, when she deluded her father away from his work, and had arranged everything as neatly as possible.

"Papa," asked Bessie, "why is Hope's birthday the same as yours?"

"Because she was born on the same day, my dear," said her father.

"Well, then she ought to be as old—I can't understand it at all."

"It's so funny," said Hope, laughing gleefully, "I tried my best to explain it. But, oh! papa, wouldn't it be nice if we had been twins?"

Both the children laughed heartily, and so did Martin, at the ludicrous idea.

"Hope, you make my headache," said Mrs. Southgate, peevishly; "nobody has any pity on my neuralgia."

The child was quiet in an instant, but her father drew her on to his knee and whispered, "You are something better—you are my little, Hope!"

"I wish you would pay some attention to what I am saying," grumbled his wife. "We want some coal, and the man won't send any because his last bill isn't paid."

"I'll attend to it to-morrow," he replied.

"Oh! yes, mamma," cried both the children, "to-morrow."

"That is always the way I am put off, I shan't be allowed to speak next!"

Hope patted her father's hand gently, to keep down the impatience she saw struggling over his face.

"Papa," said Bessie, "mamma wants money to buy me a doll."

"Oh! Bessie," said Hope, "you said you wouldn't!"

"Well, I want it," whimpered the child, "any how."

"When I can get the money you shall have it—don't tease papa."

"I am sure you bought Hope a pot of violets,"

said Mrs. Southgate, "you can always find money for her."

"The violets only cost a shilling," replied Martin; "a boy brought them into the office, and said he was hungry, so I remembered my Hope, and took them."

Hope had shrunk into herself at her mother's words; but when her father spoke she crept closer to him, and turned away her head to hide the tears that would come.

"Well, I must have some money," said the wife, "I can't go on this way."

"And I can't give you money when I haven't it!"

"It's always so—I expected it," she whined.

"I am sure we spend enough to live comfortably, yet, somehow, we are always in debt! I daren't go to the corner on account of that infernal shoe man; and, in the middle of the next block, that butcher prowls about for one—upon my life, it's enough to drive a man mad!"

"That's the way you always go on, when I speak, fretting at me as if it was my fault! I do the best I can! I'm sure, I never expected to live in a house with only one servant! I might as well be dead and buried, nobody visits me—my own relations are ashamed of me, and no wonder, such a figure as I am!"

"Oh! mamma," said Hope, "when you have that pretty new dress, papa gave you on Christmas!"

"And that is the way I am thanked for sitting up two nights, to earn the money," exclaimed Martin, bitterly.

"Please don't, papa," whispered Hope, and the keen suffering in her eyes again checked his anger.

"And you know, mamma," put in Bessie, "that on New Year's day that great author paid you so many compliments—and me, too, but he didn't say anything about Hope, though."

"Dear little pet!" exclaimed the mother, kissing the pert little monkey; but she was fairly started on the subject of her grievances, and nothing could stop her.

"I am sure nobody who saw me when I was married would know me now! Aunt Mary told me what would come of marrying a genius; she said I wouldn't have shoes to my feet, and I haven't! And just to punish me she died and left her money to cousin Amelia, who now she rides down Fifth avenue in her carriage, and don't know me——"

"Curse your aunt Mary, and her money!" exclaimed Southgate, violently, quite driven beside himself with nervous headache, and her complaints.

"Oh! oh! oh!" sobbed Mrs. Southgate, "that ever I should live to be treated in this way! (Sob—sob.) There never was anybody so wretched. I wi-wish I was d-dead along with my blessed aunt!" and she burst into a torrent of passionate grief.

"Why, mamma," said Bessie, "it's only yesterday you called her a horrid old thing!"

"So she was," exclaimed her mother, with the ready change of feeling characteristic of hysterics, "to go and serve me so, and I deserved it all!"

"You will drive me mad!" cried Martin. "I haven't slept for two nights, and I cannot stand this."

"Nor I either. I never sleep! I am dying by inches! I wish I was dead! I wish I never had married! Oh! oh!"

"I wish to heaven you never had!" cried Southgate, flinging toward the door. "You have been the curse of my life!"

"Oh! mamma, papa!" pleaded Hope, not weeping, but shivering and white. "Not to-night—be kind to-night!"

But her angel counsel was unheeded, for Martin's passionate temper was fully roused. More violent words ensued; then he rushed out of the room, leaving Mrs. Southgate and Bessie shrieking in hysterical grief, and little Hope crouched upon the floor and calling vainly,

"Papa! oh! papa!"

In his passion, Martin Southgate never heard her cry, and he hurried from the house, as he had done only too often before, to drown his cares in the wine cup.

It was almost morning when he returned, reeling into the hall and droning out a drinking song. He reached the foot of the stairs, when a sight met his eyes that sent him backward like a sudden blow.

Upon the landing he saw his daughter Hope looking in his face, motionless as the ghost of his better nature sent to warn him. An old cloak of his own, in which she had been wrapped, had fallen at her feet when she started up, and there she stood, unable to speak or move, gazing into his face with a look of horror that he never forgot to his dying day.

The shock sobered him in an instant, and he remained transfixed with shame and agony.

"Hope!" he cried, at last, frightened by her paleness. "Hope! it is I! Speak to me! Don't look so!"

She flung herself into his arms, with a burst of tears that burned into his very heart.

"Oh! father, father, is it you? I thought it

was a bad spirit come to take us. Oh! papa, papa!"

Martin folded her to his heart, and sank down upon the steps with tears that seemed to wrench his life out.

"Don't cry, don't cry!" sobbed Hope. "Now I see it's you—I'm not afraid. Oh! don't cry, papa, don't!"

And there they sat and wept together, and in that hour the baleful impulses which had marred Martin Southgate's life fell from his soul never to return again.

"Please stop, papa!" pleaded Hope; and, knowing no other way to comfort him, she repeated a little prayer that she had learned, and, as Martin listened, his heart prayed likewise.

They knelt together, father and child—the angel of his life—and both rose up and stood there, calmed by the holy influence of those simple words.

"Mamma and Bessie are both in bed," whispered Hope, "don't wake them. I couldn't get to sleep, so I sat up. You aren't angry, are you, papa?"

"Angry, my little Hope! angry?" He lifted her in his arms again and kissed her. "My child, you have saved your father, never forget that. God will bless you, I cannot."

He carried her up to her room, and lay down on the bed beside her, and both fell asleep from excitement, Hope's head pillowed upon his bosom.

From that night there was a change in Martin Southgate's life. He never again treated Hope like a child, except in the exceeding fondness he showed her; but he counseled with her as he would have done with a woman, talked to her of his pursuits, his half-forgotten hopes that seemed farther than ever from realization; and Hope listened and understood.

She read every book that he put into her hands, and that which she did not comprehend he made clear, and in all their after life there was no shadow between their hearts, no thought or feeling that was not common with them, either through the medium of words or by the perfect sympathy between their natures.

There was a change in the house. Every day Hope took some new duty upon herself, and, whenever her growing cares detained her from school, her father taught her at night, and that was the pleasantest of all.

As Hope grew older, the force of her character had its effect upon her mother. Mrs. Southgate's health failed under the inert life she had led so long, but she grew less peevish and

exact, and there was at least a kind of peace in the dwelling, for Southgate never again allowed himself to speak harshly to his wife.

So the years kept on their way, and, amid the drudgery of his life, with all the best powers of his mind fettered and wasted upon that uncongenial labor, Martin found more peace from the pleasant influence growing up in his home than he had ever known before.

Hope was thirteen now, and little Bessie eleven. The whole management of the house fell upon Hope; and, for the first time in his experience of married life, Southgate saw something of order prevailing in his home. Hope seemed to learn things by instinct, the servant was perfectly devoted to her, and a new order of things was growing into vigorous life. She no longer went to school, for her mother needed much care; but she always found time for her books, and at night the tasks were repeated to her father.

It seemed impossible that there could be so little difference in the ages of the two girls. Bessie thought and acted like a spoiled child, vain of her floss silk curls, and happy with her doll; while Hope read books that most grown women would have rated too learned, and filled her soul with the inspired eloquence of the grand old bards.

One morning, Martin was a little more at leisure than usual, and he and Hope lingered over their quiet breakfast, Bessie taking hers by her mother's bedside.

"This is, indeed, a happy change," Southgate said, glancing round the tastefully arranged table; "there never was a man had so bright a Hope as mine."

But the little damsel's mind was full of weighty thoughts, and the moment her father's first cup of tea was disposed of, she began,

"I have been thinking of something, father, and I couldn't get to sleep last night for it."

"And what was that, my Hope?" Like every imaginative and affectionate person he had a world of pretty, fanciful names, but his daughter was always called "my Hope," and never, except with so much tenderness, almost veneration, that it was inexpressibly touching.

"Why do you never write any more stories, father?"

"I? Why I haven't done such a thing since you were a wee thing; I have forgotten how."

"Oh! no, I am sure you have not! And yesterday I found among your papers a half finished novel."

"I had quite forgotten the thing existed. Was it great trash, my Hope?"

"It was very, very beautiful! Father, I want you to finish it. You will have more time this spring. Will you do it for my sake?"

What would he have refused her? worn, tired man, in whose breast she had made sunlight all her brief life!

"We will read it over to-night, my Hope," he said, "and, if you approve, we will finish it."

The manuscript was read, and Southgate himself, coming after such a lapse of time to look at it with cool, critical judgment, was astonished at the freshness of thought and original management of the plot. He went to work upon it at once—not with any thought of fame or emolument—only to please his child, who sat by him as he worked, and read each page as he laid it aside.

The book was completed at last, and then all Southgate's interest in it was gone, and even Hope's solicitations could not induce him again to run the gauntlet of the publishers.

So Hope said no more, but she did not by any means put the matter aside in her mind. Not long after, a friend of her father called at the house, a man of high social and literary eminence, who was greatly attached to Hope, and remained for an hour's quiet chat, although Martin was absent.

"Mr. Bornley," said Hope, "I have a secret to tell you."

"By all means, my dear; nothing I like so much."

"Oh! but you must be very serious," she said, shaking her head sagely, "it is of the greatest importance."

"Grave as a Mussulman! What is it, Miss Hope?"

She went to a drawer and took out the manuscript, bringing it in her hands as carefully as some precious ornament.

"It's a novel, sir, that I want you to read; and do please to like it!"

"Have you turned blue stocking already?" he said, gravely. "Oh! I am sorry for that."

"My stockings are quite white, sir," replied Hope, in a way that made Bornley laugh heartily. "But look at the book, please."

He read a few pages here and there, occasionally interrupting himself with ejaculations of admiration and surprise; while Hope sat looking at him, trembling with pleasurable excitement.

"My father wrote it!" she exclaimed, at last, unable longer to control herself.

"The deuce he did! I always knew he could. And the man buries himself in a daily paper—why he ought to be trounced!"

Hope explained all Martin's hesitation.

"It shall be published, nevertheless," said Bornley. "Ten years ago I prophesied that your father would be a great man, and I'll not be disappointed. Give me that manuscript, and keep your own counsel for three days. Good night, Miss Hope."

Often in her after life, Hope wondered how she lived those three days; but outwardly she was calm enough, and, if human prayers ever availed, the supplications she offered up must have been heard.

The time passed, and, punctual to his appointment, Mr. Bornley made his appearance. Hope went into the room quiet, but pale as a ghost.

"Well, sir?" she gasped, "well?"

"It is well," he said; "my dear, your father's fortune is made."

Hope heard nothing more, her brain was reeling, and she felt blindly for a chair. When she came to herself, Mr. Bornley was carrying her to the window.

"I am well now," she said, "please let me get down, and tell me all about it."

He looked at her as he would have a woman, and with the respect he would have shown to a queen.

"I took the book to Standish, and he was delighted with it—just now American novels are the rage. He will publish it at once, pay your father a large sum, and if as successful as we hope, will take another next year, of which Southgate can retain the copyright."

It was decided to say nothing to Martin at the time. Mr. Bornley signed the contract for him—and before even Hope had space to grow weary waiting, there came a great pile of proof sheets.

Hope went up to her father's study—he had one now—and knocked.

"Come in, my Hope," he said, drearily, and she opened the door. Martin sat by his desk leaning his head upon his hands.

"You are sick, father?"

"No, only tired, and—I must tell you—I fear I shall lose my situation. I have been a slave, but I cannot quite give up all freedom of thought to those men."

"I don't think you will care much at losing it," Hope said, composedly.

"And what are we to live on?" he asked, looking at her, as if he thought she had taken leave of her senses.

"On your genius, father," she cried, proudly, "for you are to be a great man—Mr. Bornley says it, and I say it, and you shall!"

She laid the proof sheets, and the bank check, on the desk before him.

"My book!" he exclaimed; "a check for me?"

"Standish has taken it, father, and will take another—your fortune is made. I am so glad, oh! so glad!"

The time had gone by when anything could move Southgate's heart to the wild excitement of delight; but when he thoroughly understood, his first thought was to thank God, who had given him such a child.

The book was published, and was a success; and after all those years of toil and neglect, Southgate found himself suddenly raised to eminence, applauded by the very men who had once laughed at his efforts.

He was not vain nor proud—he seldom thought of it—never realized that he was distinguished, for the misery of fame is that it always comes too late.

But from that time there was no more want, no more petty debts, and in the sunlight of prosperity, Southgate's soul rested itself like a shipwrecked mariner reposing on the beach and hearing still the roar of the waves, from which he has barely escaped.

The close of the year was darkened by the death of the wife and mother. They all grieved for the helpless woman, but one who had so utterly wasted her life as she had done, could not expect to be missed—she had not made her place holy, and, therefore, though she left regret behind, they could not hallow her memory into religion.

Time passed, and every year Southgate rose higher in the literary world—he had reached the pinnacle of success, and the love of his children kept his heart from feeling that void which distinction so often brings.

Hope was nineteen now, and Bessie just in the brightness of early girlhood. Both were lovely girls, but Hope had nothing of the buoyancy and light-heartedness, which made Bessie's youth so beautiful—she had grown old too fast for that—suffered too deeply with her father's pain; but she was a woman to win admiration and respect, and true, earnest affection from those in whose natures love is something more than passion, something holier than an idolatrous dream.

But another trouble came upon Hope, one for which she was not prepared, but under which she did not give way. Their father's position took them much into society, and among the men who crowded about them, was one about whom Hope's fancy flung the bright hues, with

which young girls are accustomed to clothe an object of affection.

Landor came much to the house, and as Bessie was more petulant and wayward with him than almost any one else, Hope believed that she disliked him, and often she never came down during his visits. But there was a change in her, over which Hope grieved, and so sought to win her confidence, but received only mocking laughter, or downright ill-nature.

At last, when poor Hope's fairy dream was the brightest, a rude shock dispelled it, and brought her back to the actual life, which looked cold and dreary enough after its sunshine.

Landor called one evening looking pale and dispirited. Hope sang him his favorite songs, and did her best to cheer him, but he appeared so obstinately moody, that she grew almost gloomy herself.

"Miss Southgate—Hope!" he said, suddenly.

She started, and there was something in his face, which sent the warmth from her heart.

"May I speak with you frankly?" he went on; "you have been such a kind friend to me, that I feel I may."

She could find no answer.

"You must have seen," he said, his handsome face glowing with the feeling that trembled in his voice, "how much I love your sister—will you tell me why she avoids me?"

Struck the cruel blow upon her heart, and never knew that he had wounded her—smote every bright hope with the black frost of his words, and left them clinging sore and dead upon her soul, unwitting always of her pain!

Hope closed her eyes for a moment, to gather strength—the world seemed literally passing away.

"You are silent," he said; "then she does hate me?"

Only the heart that has been tried can understand how Hope's strong will crushed back the withering pain, and bound the shuddering pulses with an iron hand.

"You gave me no time to speak," she said, not a trace of emotion in her voice, cold and hollow to her as clouds falling upon a coffin-lid—no trouble in her face—nothing but the weary look in her eyes, through which her stricken soul looked out.

"May I hope, dare I?" he cried, wildly. "Oh! I have waited so long—suffered so much—can there be such happiness near?"

The past weeks shot in review before Hope's memory—she understood all now; Bessie's petulance and hours of depression, and Landor's kindness to herself.

VOL. XXXVII.—20

"Wait for me here," she said, "I cannot tell how this thing is, but Bessie shall answer you herself."

She walked steadily out of the room, never heeding his broken exclamations, and went up stairs. She opened the door of Bessie's chamber, and in the dim light saw her sister stretched upon the bed, weeping like a grieved child.

"You have done wrong, Bessie," were her first words, "I saw that you were unhappy, but could not divine the cause. Go down stairs, little one, Herbert Landor is waiting for you."

Bessie sprang off the bed with a cry.

"For me—do you mean——"

She could not go on, but hid her face in the bed clothes. Hope raised her, and began to arrange the disheveled ringlets.

"He will tell you himself, Bessie, he only wanted me to send you to him."

The girl went down stairs, and Hope was alone. Luckily her father was out; it could not be sinful to grieve for a little hour over her beautiful dream!

But when Bessie returned, she found Hope calm and quiet as ever. Hope did not shrink when her sister embraced her, and told the tale of her past suffering and present bliss.

"I thought he loved you, Hope. I knew you did not care for him, and I almost hated you that you should have come between his heart and mine."

Hope heard it all, kissed her and blessed her as a mother might have done, and lay down by her side to watch the night out, while Bessie murmured in her happy sleep.

The next day, Landor called upon Southgate, and when the young man had gone to find Bessie, Martin sought Hope.

"You know," he said, coming upon her in the quiet of her chamber, "you have heard it all?"

"Yes, father, and Bessie is very happy."

"And my Hope, my all?"

"Blest in her sister's happiness!"

He put his arms about her, and she clung to him as in the olden time, weeping for a space, but so quietly he scarcely felt her tears. No word of confidence passed; whatever Southgate imagined or knew, was buried in his heart, only from that day, he watched his darling even more tenderly and constantly than before.

The brief months of Bessie's engagement passed, and the bridal morning came.

Hope dressed her with her own hands—stood beside her at the altar—and those who had known her all her life, marveled at the saint-like calm which made her face so beautiful.

All was over—the gay breakfast—the tearful leave takings—Bessie and her husband were gone.

Hope stole up into the library for a little rest, leaving her father with one or two old friends who lingered still.

She stood by the window and looked out into the little park, bright with early spring, and the void in her soul ached with exceeding bitterness. She did not love Herbert Landor; it was a dream, every trace of which had been carefully covered up; but still in her heart there was a craving and loneliness unfelt in the old life of solitude, which might never come back to her.

Some one spoke her name; she turned and saw her old friend, Mr. Bornley, looking at her.

"Forgive me, if I intrude," he said, "but I was waiting here for you, I felt certain that you would come in. Sit down, Hope, I want to talk to you."

She obeyed him; she had always been accustomed to doing so, just as she would have obeyed an elder brother.

"Hope," he said, in his clear, honest voice, "can you ever look upon me in any other light than a friend—will you let me be something nearer, dearer to you—will you be my wife, Hope?"

She looked at him in simple surprise! In the pride of his intellect, the glory of his fame, he had seemed as far beyond her sphere, as the sun that brightens the earth with its beams.

"I have loved you for a long time, Hope, even when you were so young that the idea of marriage would have been out of the question; but, brave little Hope, you have been the one love of this poor life that has gone far on toward its meridian."

She could not let him continue, it seemed cruelty, although his words were very pleasant to her.

"Please don't," she said, in her former child-like way; "I can't hear you, Mr. Bornley, indeed I can't."

"Then you do not love me. I have deceived myself. Well, my little Hope, it is only one pain more."

"I am not worthy to be your wife! It is only a few months," and the crimson on her pale cheeks showed the effort that avowed cost her womanly pride, "since I thought I loved the man who is now my sister's husband. The dream is gone—I know it was only that—but the pain is there still."

Bornley bowed his head in his hands and was silent. It was hard to see the hope that had so

long made his life beautiful fading farther and farther from his reach.

"I have the courage to say this," she went on, "because I feel it is right. Oh! Mr. Bornley, we shall be friends still; you will not put a poor foolish girl wholly away from your heart."

"I could never do that, never!"

He took her hands and folded them together in his own, looking into her eyes with his deep, earnest gaze.

"Neither can I put my dream away as you have done; for mine was the only promise of happiness I could look for here. I am going away now—it may be a long time before I can return; but remember, Hope, when I do come back, the question I have asked to-day will be on my lips again."

He kissed her hands and went slowly out of the room; to Hope it seemed as if she had let the best part of her life drift slowly from her hold, and had not the energy left to cling to it.

Martin Southgate and his daughter went on in the calm life which had settled down upon them. They were happy, for love like that between their souls must have brightened any existence.

It was Hope's twenty-fifth birthday! Her youth was going from her, but it left in its place a holy repose and steadfastness of purpose which made life still more beautiful than it had been in her girlish days.

Her father had gone out, and she sat in the library watching Bessie's little boy, as he lay asleep upon a cushion at her feet.

The door opened, and Hope said, quickly,

"Father, come and look at little Martin. If I move he will wake, I am afraid."

There was a step, but not like her father's. She rose quickly and stood face to face with Mr. Bornley.

"You have come!" she exclaimed. "I am so glad—my father will be so happy."

She strove to question him of his travels, trying to keep down the color that glowed in her cheeks; but he would not be put off thus. He held her hands tightly in his own, and, as of old, his eyes read her very soul.

"Now, Hope, will you answer me? Can you be my wife?"

Her eyes sank beneath the fervor of his, but he would not let her go, and pressed still for an answer.

"Why, I am an old maid," she said, feeling the tears so near her eyes that she could only keep them back by a poor jest.

"I know you are," he said, bluntly, "the

young girls all call you so. I am over forty, Hope, I am not too young."

She was silent still. The tumult in her heart would not allow her to speak.

"Answer me, Hope, do you love me?"

The color died out of her face. The holy calm, like prayer, that in moments of deep feeling illuminated her face, stole over it then.

"I do love you," came her answer, "and I will be your wife!"

There was but little said for a time. Bornley held her to his heart with the deep sigh of a man who has realized, at last, the want of a life-time.

"God is very good to me," he said; "I will guard you well, my Hope!"

They conversed for a long time, and Hope let him see all the rare treasures of her heart, as no other human being save her father had ever been permitted to do, and that proud, care-worn man renewed his youth in the freshness of her soul.

Martin Southgate entered, and found them

together. He needed no explanation; from the first he had known everything.

"With any other man than you," he said, "I should feel that I had lost my Hope; as it is, I know that I have gained a son."

In quiet and established happiness there is little to record. What Hope was to her father and husband no words of mine can describe. The tears are in my eyes as I think of her; but this feeble sketch portrays her character so faintly, that no one in reading these pages will be able to realize anything of the true woman—the Hope of their lives.

Here I leave them!

Martin Southgate had been saved from the moral shipwreck which once menaced him, and, though the wild dreams of his youth had never been fulfilled, the life before him had enough of beauty and peace to compensate for the loss of those visions which cannot be realized here, but may perhaps await us on the threshold of the hereafter—angel-pinions to bear the freed soul into the second and higher cycle of its existence.

"NOT IN OUR SET."

BY ELLEN ASHTON.

It was between the first and second acts of a celebrated opera. The audience had just ceased applauding Patti, who had been called before the curtain twice; and now everybody was looking around to see who was in the house.

A gentleman, who appeared comparatively a stranger, leaned over to speak to a lady before him.

"I have been so long abroad," he said, "that I hardly know anybody. Yet I never, in any opera house, saw so many pretty faces. Who is that beautiful creature opposite? I mean the one in pink, on the second seat of the balcony, playing her fan with the grace of a Spanish woman."

"Oh! that girl!" was the contemptuous reply. "That's Marian Vaughan, the daughter of a retired pork merchant, or tailor, or something of that sort. She's not in our set, however, and I know very little about her."

"I was going, coz, to ask you to introduce me," said Harry Berkley, who had been the first speaker. "But I see that won't do."

"Dear me!" cried the lady. "The girl isn't in society, at all, I tell you."

"The truth is, Harry," interposed Charley Thorne, the last speaker's brother, "the girls are all jealous of Miss Vaughan. She is beautiful, as you see: and witty and accomplished also. Then, too, she's full of character. Quite independent, I assure you, doing exactly what she likes, though she never does anything unlady-like. Her father is enormously rich, and so she is able to gratify all her tastes. All 'our set,' eh! Amelia? vow she is extravagant, and try to frighten us poor fellows from marrying her. I'm very glad," he added, satirically, "that some of 'our first families' have the reputations of our grandfathers and great-grandfathers to live upon, for, 'pon my soul, they've neither money nor brains in general."

Miss Thorne turned her white shoulder contemptuously on her brother, eyed Miss Vaughan askance, and commenced picking her to pieces, in which delightful occupation she was most assiduously assisted by a female friend "in our set," who had accompanied her to the opera.

Harry Berkley was the match of the season. Inheriting a vast estate, while yet in his

minority, he had gone abroad, as soon as he had completed his studies, and had remained there, principally in Paris, until his twenty-fifth year. His return to America, unmarried, had put all the marriageable young ladies in the city into a flutter. His claims, to be "in society," nobody could deny, for his great-grandfather had been a colonial governor, his grandfather a general in the revolution, and his father a senator of the United States; while his mother and grandmother had each been favorite toasts in their day, and fashionable leaders in the most select circle of their native town. Hence, no young bachelor was more courted. But Amelia Thorne, his second cousin, had secretly appropriated him to herself. One so genteely born, she thought, should marry nobody less genteel; and who was there, she added proudly to herself, with an equal quantity of the "blue blood" of America as herself?

The next opera night, however, Harry did not invite her, as she had expected, and she was forced to press her father into her service as a cavalier. Imagine her chagrin, on taking her seat, to observe her cousin talking to Miss Vaughan, the latter, looking more beautiful than ever.

"Good heavens! pa," she cried, "do you see Harry? He is actually with that Vaughan girl."

"And I hear," replied her father, unconscious of his daughter's plans, "that she is very fascinating. I shouldn't wonder if Harry was to marry her."

Miss Thorne colored with anger, and bit the end of her fan. The opera, that night, gave her but little pleasure, for she was watching Miss Vaughan, and was mad with jealousy.

The next morning her truant cousin presented himself. She welcomed him with something of a sneer.

"So you got introduced to Miss Vaughan?" were her words. "I suppose, next, you'll want to know our cook."

"My dear cousin," said Harry, gracefully taking his seat beside her, "you don't know how you girls—the girls of 'our set,' I mean—astonish me. I have just come from Europe, where I have been preaching up republican institutions, and yet, the very first thing I hear,

at home, is that merit is nothing, and being 'in society' everything."

"To be sure. A real lady owes it to herself not to associate with everybody."

"By which you mean that you, and a dozen or two others, pretend to be better than those who are as cultivated as yourselves. Let me tell you, coz, that you lose more than you are aware of, for Miss Vaughan, and others like her, who rest their social claims on their accomplishments, are, as Charley says, far more agreeable acquaintances than 'our set' generally. You are only laughed at, and this, not merely by those you think you put down, but by all sensible people."

Miss Amelia was purple with rage. She had never been talked to so plainly before, and she was not disposed to submit to it, even for the best match of the season, much less from a cousin.

"Laughed at, am I?" she cried, rising. "Sir, you forget who you are speaking to. But when people consort with tailor's daughters, their manners leave them."

"As I shall leave you, fair coz," answered Harry, determined not to quarrel, "for I see

you are not looking quite as lovely, at this moment, as usual, and I try never to see a lady except in her best looks, so that I may always remember her pleasantly."

Half an hour afterward, Miss Amelia could have bitten her tongue off, in anger at herself, for having said what she did. She had virtually driven Harry away, she reflected, and so lost all chance of securing him for herself. What if she had also driven him to Miss Vaughan?

The suspicion, alas! proved correct. Harry's engagement has just been announced. And those who used to sneer at Miss Vaughan, as "not in our set," are already making interest for cards for the wedding, which is to be "the affair of the season," and is to come off early in the summer.

"Take my advice, Charley," said Harry, the other morning, "and marry a wife who rests her claims on personal amiability, intelligence, and accomplishment; for she'll make you a thousand times happier than any of the haughty girls, too proud to learn anything, and too selfish to care for anybody but themselves, who chiefly make up what they call 'OUR SET.'"

When the game is to be played, the names of the ladies present are to be written on separate pieces of card; the names of the gentlemen on other pieces of card, of a different shape. Place in separate baskets, or other convenient receptacles, first, the names of the ladies; secondly, the names of the gentlemen; thirdly, the cards on which are written the "characters for ladies;" fourthly, the cards on which are written the "characters for gentlemen;" fifthly, the cards which contain the "predictions;" and lastly, place in a bag a number of small pieces of card, all of the same shape and size, one-third of the number to be marked "L. F.," one-third "G. F.," and the remaining third to be marked with an asterisk *. A president should be appointed. The game is now ready for playing. One of the company draws the name of a lady, another draws the name of a gentleman. The gentleman leads the lady up to the president. The gentleman draws one of the "characters for ladies," which he hands to the president. The lady in a similar manner draws one of the "characters for gentlemen," which is also handed to the president. The president then reads to the company the "characters" of the lady and gentleman before him. The president then draws from the basket containing the "predictions" one card, the lines on which he reads to the pair before him, as descriptive of what may be their future fortunes.

The "bag" containing the small pieces of card is now held forth to the gentleman, who draws *one* piece. If it bear the letters "G. F.," the gentleman must pay a forfeit, *unless* he can name the author of the lines read as *his* "character;" if he can do this he redeems his forfeit. If the piece of card drawn bear the letters "L. F.," the lady is liable to a forfeit, *unless* she names the author of the lines read as *her* "character." But if the card bear a star *, then the gentleman is entitled to salute his partner; if, however, the lady names the author of the lines contained in the "prediction," the gentleman loses his privilege.

Every name, character, prediction, or forfeit card, when once drawn, is to be laid aside, and not used again until all the names have been drawn.

When the names have all been drawn, the forfeits may be cried, and redeemed in the usual way. Or the names and cards may be replaced, and the game go round again, as endless combinations will arise if a sufficient store of "characters" and "predictions" has been secured.

The "characters" and "predictions" may be used on other occasions. Where but two or three are present, much amusement may be created by selecting the names of "absent friends" and testing their "characters," and trying their future by a "prediction."

The pleasure of a friendly visit may be enhanced by requesting the visitor to draw a "character;" many unexpected revelations may thus be made.

EXAMPLES—CHARACTERS FOR LADIES.

"Beauty is *her* own,
The feeling heart, simplicity of life,
And elegance and taste."—THOMSON.

"Her modest looks, the cottage might adorn,
Sweet as the primrose, peeps beneath the thorn."

GOLDSMITH.

"She never complain'd, but she loved to the last!
And the tear in her beautiful eye
Often told that her thoughts were gone back to the past,
And the youth who had left her to die."

T. K. HERVEY.

"Ye fair!
Be greatly cautious of your sliding hearts."—THOMSON.

CHARACTERS FOR GENTLEMEN.

"A youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown."—GRAY.

"Never shall his head control

PARLOR PASTIMES.

CHARACTERS AND PREDICTIONS.—On several slips of card, write quotations from our poets and dramatists, descriptive of a lady's "character."

On cards of a different size, or color, write other quotations, descriptive of a gentleman's "character."

On cards of another size or color, write other quotations, applicable to the future fortunes of a lady and gentleman. These last are called "predictions."

The quotations should not exceed four lines each.

Beneath each quotation should be written the author's name.

The honest beatings of his soul;
And ne'er by him shall be repress
The gushing feelings of his breast!"—T. K. HERVEY.

"Sound integrity.

A firm, unshaken, uncorrupted soul."—THOMSON.

"Let the aspiring youth beware of love:

Of the smooth glance, beware."—THOMSON.

"A man severe he was, and stern to view,

I knew him well."—GOLDSMITH.

PREDICTIONS.

"With each other blest, creative love

Still bade eternal Eden smile around."—THOMSON.

"Smoothly they pursue their way,

With even tenor, and with equal breath,

Alike through cloudy, and through sunny day,

Then sink in peace to death."—KIRKE WHITE.

"He

Smiles by his cheerful fire, and round surveys

His children's looks that brighten at the blaze;

While his loved partner, boastful of her hoard, :

Displays her cleanly platter on the board."

GOLDSMITH.

"Gayly we glide, in the gaze of the world,

With streamers afloat, and with canvas unfurl'd;

All gladness and glory to wandering eyes,

Yet charter'd by sorrow, and freighted with sighs."

T. K. HERVEY.

PRIDE vs. LOVE.

BY A. L. OTIS.

I WAS born, and lived till twenty years of age upon my father's farm in the mountains of Pennsylvania, in the midst of good, stolid Dutch neighbors, and with only a few books of my dead mother's library to save me from perfect congeniality with my surroundings.

"Spenser, my son, you must marry, thur's no two ways about ut," said my father to me daily.

Thereupon I slurred the girls of the neighborhood, called them slip-shod jades, too free by half. There was not indeed one of them at all pretty, whom I had not kissed half a dozen times unforbidden.

Then my father snorted out accusations of sentimentality, and praised the neat dairies of the maidens. This banter was our usual evening's amusement, and the next morning I returned to the tillage of our farm, as if no thought of change had ever entered my mind: and, as if, instead of a burning heart fixed upon an ideal love, I had had in my bosom a steam ploughing, sowing, and reaping machine, as if my only hope in life was to turn my body and soul into farm products, to enrich my acres with a new phosphate of lime—brain power, and hand labor.

I would inherit all my father's broad acres. In return, he thought I ought cheerfully to expend myself upon them. Perhaps I might have done so upon sober second thought, had not the projectors of the Pennsylvania Railroad chosen to run it through a valley on our farm.

This railroad let the air of the wide world into our stagnant atmosphere of stolid contentment. It brought engineers, laborers, taverns, and at last travelers. Among the latter, several citizens of Philadelphia, pleased with the quiet beauty of our mountain valley, and the abundance of game, came out for a few weeks in summer to shoot. "Willow Bottom Cottage" was occupied the first year by half a dozen bachelors, who fraternized with me cordially, lent me novels, and told me of city life; while I, in return, showed them trout streams, and squirrel, or even deer, haunts. The next year we had an application, very early in the spring, for the cottage. A civil engineer on the road wished to occupy it, with his two maiden sisters. It was let to them, and I was sent to the station for them, by my father, with our best vehicle,

and two fine grays. I found there an elderly gentleman, who had the air and look of a high-bred man in straightened circumstances. With him stood his two feeble and elderly sisters. A man servant and two maids guarded the baggage; and a little apart, gazing with delight down the valley to the distant hills, there sat a young girl, who instantly absorbed my attention.

I heard her call the gentleman "uncle," in the sweetest-toned voice my ear and blood had ever vibrated to. Her face, in its quiet self-possession and dignity, far more than in its beauty, was a revelation to me of true ladyhood. But what touched me with the nearest pleasure, I think, was the glimpse I caught of her foot in its dainty gaiter-boot.

When I beheld its lithe form, its little perfectness, and its, not foolishly, but appropriately delicate encasement, a kind of enchantment seized upon me. I felt that my hour had come; for this neat, elegant foot seemed to me a type of the whole creature, and to show, by a distinctive mark, the difference between the lady and the ill-shod, (yet on holidays tight-shod,) splay-footed frauleins, who had heretofore been the only visible type of womankind which it had been my lot to encounter.

Then the tones of all their voices! The clear, low, distinct articulation—the musical and intellectual modulation, the refinement and reticence of feeling! It was the first intimation I had had of the beauty of heaven's first law, applied to human emotions and their expression.

I also felt keenly, on my way home, another thing less agreeable, *i. e.* I was a mere machine in their estimation. They not only never addressed a word to me, except by way of directions as to the disposition of their shawls and baskets; but they seemed to ignore my very existence as a human being, and to take far more interest in my horses.

Now, owing to my father's broad acres, and open purse, I, his sole heir, had been treated with the consideration I thought my character entitled me to by all the neighbors. Behold here, I had suddenly become as a clod of the valley under these aristocratic feet!

At their door all entered the house, but the

eldest lady, her servant, and myself. When he and I had carried up all the trunks, and I was unhitching my horses, I saw her fingering her purse. My blood had been simmering for some time. Now it boiled. She had already paid my father for all expenses of transportation and house arrangement. So I knew that she meant to give me "a fee." She called me, and reminded me of another basket under the front seat. When I handed it to her, with a delicate and adroit motion of her hand, she placed a silver dollar in my palm before I knew it, or could prevent.

What should I do?—throw it contemptuously down with a full burst of my ire? No, I would take my first lesson in gentlemanly self-control. I bowed to her, smiled, bitterly enough, I think, and, turning to the servant, handed the alms to him. He stared, but by force of habit pocketed the coin. I sprang behind my horses, and drove away.

The next day, as I passed their door, which was close to the roadside, (the farm road—not the public road,) the same lady called me. She said she had observed that I was a skillful driver, and, therefore, they would be glad to engage me in that capacity: also to hire my horses. My amazement probably looked like blank stupidity, so she obligingly advised me to think of her proposal, and bade me good day.

This summary dismissal did abash me somewhat, and I walked down the lane feeling quite bewildered as to my position in the world. I had hitherto walked and held my head as became a lord of the soil, at least: now—was I a menial or not?

The previous night had been spent in feverish tossings, and equally feverish speculations as to whether I should be soon on the same terms at the cottage, as I had been when its bachelor occupants rented it, but I knew that that was impossible, when I remembered all the remarks upon the proper exclusiveness of ladies, which those wild and free young men had uttered. Then came such a keen longing for their society—I mean that of the ladies, that I must gratify it by some means—I must push my way to their presence and enjoy social communion with them at any cost. But in fierce struggle with this desire arose my stubborn pride, which refused to let me act the toady, or in any way seek them.

This proposition that I should drive them daily over our beautiful hills, show their points of interest, give their traditions, and wild Indian legends, would bring me into the converse I longed for. My desire—and my lowest kind of

pride, that of station, were thus set face to face, and it remained to be seen which would frown the other down. At last the wish to know them better, and especially, perhaps, to let them know me better, induced me to retrace my steps and knock at their door. The lady was sitting upon a sofa in the hall. Her niece sat sewing beside her, and bowed politely to me.

"I am willing, ma'am," said I, "to let you have the use of my horses, and to do you the best service I can as driver."

"You will not refuse a proper remuneration for your trouble?"

"I am willing to make a fair bargain, perhaps not of the kind you propose."

"Thank you. A fair compensation for your services is, of course, necessary, but it shall be arranged in any way you please; added to the rent, if you like."

"We mountain men do not find our only 'compensation' in dollars and cents. I do not want them to be the basis of this agreement. I propose to forego my pride and become your hired driver, but my compensation will be your society only. That will be more than enough. And on your part you must forego the pride which makes you aristocrats always insist upon requiring good service with coin. On these terms my horses and I will be here every day at whatever hour you please."

"I decline making any such arrangement—entirely," she said, with chilling dignity, and immediately afterward maintained a silence of displeasure, which I broke by taking leave. Miss Aline C——, the niece, rose, and accompanying me to the gate, asked the name of a mountain shrub which grew there, and praised the cottage, and my father's taste in the cottage garden. A woman knows so well how to console!

When I thus found myself excluded from my paradise, I thought at first that I must go away from home, but I found that I could not leave this birth-place of my hope. There were enough glimpses of joy to be had here to make the charm irresistible.

The Willow Bottom lay between our house and the village, and I passed the cottage every night on my way to the mill, where we "boys" met to play quoits and ball, or to swim. Often, as I passed the house, I heard sweet voices within, sometimes laughter, too—musical, subdued laughter, such as I had never heard before; and singing, which held me by the ear so, that my lingering footsteps could scarcely carry me past. Yet I felt that I had no right to stop and listen, for if they saw me passing their voices fell.

Week after week went by, and I caught daily glimpses of Miss Aline, generally as I descended the hill, and their garden lay beneath me. The subtle pleasure of these stolen sunbeams—I often stopped at a distance to gaze—kindled my ambition. To save my life I could not help pausing to follow her dainty motions with my forbidden eyes—eyes often dimmed, for a moment, with a passionate moisture; I knew not whether it was the hot rain of anger, or the dew of love.

I soon discovered that she took long rambles on the mountains alone, for her uncle was seldom at home more than two days in the week; and her aunts could not have walked a mile without a subsequent illness. This discovery caused me much uneasiness, for there were dangers on the mountains.

I begged my father to warn her, as soon as I heard of her walking far alone, but he said he would do no such thing, for that these folks took on high airs, because, instead of living under God's sky, they had lived in band-box houses, and between the covers of books!

So I took her under my own protection. I followed her in all her walks, to guard and watch her; though I kept as great a distance from her as possible, as a sort of compromise with my honor; which, in spite of my indignant showing that her safety demanded my vigilance, would persist in warning me against being a spy. It was not, however, always possible to avoid close observation. Some sudden turn or pause of hers often brought us so near that I could hear her breathing, while hid in some tangle, and she unconscious of any human observer.

How innately womanly was she, when the deepest solitude never betrayed her into one ungraceful stride, one rude struggle with impeding boughs, nor one boydenish feat of useless daring. The same dainty elegance and gentle disembarassment from all opposition, which makes a woman the beloved and reigning queen of her household, ruled even the forest's savage forces.

I led an intense life in those days—all frost, or fire, all scorched drouth, or hurricane and flood. After a month of following her trail like any Indian, unsolaced by a single glance, or word, and consequently in a fever of disquiet, I one day saw her step upon a copperhead, one of the numerous poisonous snakes which infest our woods. Fortunately she trod upon the very head of the reptile, and passed onward quite unaware of her danger.

This brought me to a resolve. I met her just

beyond the next clump of bushes, and had the pleasure of seeing her startled glance melt into a smile of perfect confidence and ease. She bowed pleasantly.

"Will you let an old woodsman tell you the secret of walking safely in these forests where there are so many snakes?" I asked.

"I shall thank you very much," she answered, with trusting submission to my instructions, and an eager curiosity in her sweet face.

"Then never step, as you did just now, over a broken bough, or fallen tree, or stone. There may be a rattlesnake lying on the other side. Always step upon the log or stone, and then look about before you set your foot down."

"Are there really rattlesnakes here?" she asked, growing pale, and looking about uneasily.

"Yes, and copperheads. Not ten paces back you stepped upon one."

"I?" she exclaimed, with a shudder.

"Yes. Come back. He is there still, very likely. They are very sluggish." As we returned, I felt her looking at me cautiously, but keenly. Like all guilty persons, I trembled for my secret. I could hardly forego this silent guard—tantalizing as it was, even at her bidding.

I cut a crotched stick, held the reptile for her to examine, and gave her meanwhile as much wood-craft as I could crowd into five minutes.

"If I give up these walks I shall be a prisoner," she said, musing; "for my aunts find it impossible to make comfortable and safe arrangements for riding."

"You blame me for that, I suppose?" I asked, regretfully.

"No," she answered, with her own peculiar, gentle frankness. "On the contrary, I liked your self-respect in that matter, and I thank you now for the hints for my safety you have given me, because I wish very much to continue walking, and I must do so *alone*—or not at all."

This was somewhat marked. Did she suspect my espionage? She looked full at me as she said so, and though my gaze, caught unawares, called up a bright blush to her cheeks, she bade me good day pleasantly, and turned toward home.

I had the good fortune to be of another service to her, for, though I abstained from following her footsteps for a day or two after this meeting, I suffered so much from apprehensions of danger to her, that I persuaded myself she actually needed me imperatively.

With a more throbbing heart than ever, I once more awaited her on the edge of the forest, and

when she came, followed her unseen. She took the path which led to the place where she had trodden upon the snake. She looked about for the reptile. She sat down upon the log, leaned her head on her hand, and seemed to fall into a happy day dream. She arose, walked to where I had met her, paused in reverie, and then passed on with a tender smile upon her lip, and a rising blush upon her cheek. She turned once more, stood long dreamily gazing into the deep shade, and then said audibly, with a little sigh,

"Thank you, sir!"

The intoxication of my heart so dizzied me, that I only kept within sound of her steps by instinct, and know not whither she was leading me, until I suddenly beheld her standing, looking exceedingly alarmed, and evidently lost. I knew where we were by the embankment of the railroad, which was just beyond the cleared space where Aline was standing.

I should instantly have offered to conduct her home, but my emergence from the woods just there, would certainly make her aware of my pursuit: so I hesitated. She walked toward the embankment, and I saw one of the laborers hastily leave a shanty to overtake her. She seemed to ask directions of him, then turned in the way he pointed, and, thanking him, hastened forward. He had stood in an attitude of respect so long as she faced him, doubtless awed by her quiet dignity, but no sooner did she turn than he stretched out his hand and clutched her dress, holding her firmly, while he spoke to her.

She gave one terrified, sweeping look around, as if in despair of help, when seeing me hastening toward her, she uttered a cry of joy and sprang to me, slipped her hand within my arm, and clung closely to me. Her face was pale, but with indignation rather than fear.

"Go back to your work," I said to the man; and then led the trembling girl toward home.

We had not taken five steps, when a stone whizzed past us, and, as I turned, another struck my forehead. My straw hat was sufficient protection, and the blow was scarcely worth regarding, except in its consequences. When I reeled slightly with the concussion, I felt her sudden supporting clasp, and saw a quiver of pain pass over her features, so acute, and so tender, that I dreamed of it for days and weeks.

The next day her uncle called to thank me; and he invited me there to tea. I declined; they must be willing to accept favors from me, I said to myself, before I could be willing to break their bread. Then he intimated that the

high regard in which I was now held at the cottage, made the ladies repent their former rejection of my horses. I renewed my offer to drive them, and Mr. C—— said that when I invited the ladies to take a drive with me, they would be happy to go. So many an afternoon of delight was before me, and each, as it came, was enjoyed fully.

Winter came, and as the duties of his business still exacted Mr. C——'s presence in our part of the country, he made arrangements for remaining; his sisters and niece also staid.

I heard the latter much commiserated by her relatives, and more still by the servants, for being buried in the wild wood, and thus lost to all the gay pleasures of the city—but I observed that she repelled their sympathy on this head with a secret irritation and a deep blush. I once caught a furtive glance—not at me, but directly in an opposite direction—a studied effort, my vanity whispered. Oh! how my vanity pampered me with sweet food!

That Aline might see a country ball, and rejoice her heart by the sight of dancing, I procured her an invitation to one. Her aunts consented to her going as spectator. I was to drive them there in our sleigh.

Guess my chagrin when I found, upon going to harness my grays, that my father had lent our best sleigh to a neighbor, and that I had only an old affair to depend upon, it being too late to scour the country in hopes of finding one to borrow. Having mended and tried it, I found it pretty strong, and so took in my cargo of ladies with little uneasiness. Aline, her uncle, and youngest aunt, went with me.

We were all in high spirits, such buoyant spirits as only mountain air can create. Our horses, too, were eager for a run through the bright moonlighted snow, and I gave them free rein while the track was hard, knowing the danger of straining the old sleigh would make it necessary to check our speed when we came to the unbroken lanes we must traverse. All was mad and merry until we reached the lonely road, and there I found it harder to calm down my grays than I had expected. In turning a short corner, they whisked around it uncontrollably. The runners gave way to the pressure of the deep snow, and the body of the sleigh was thrown with some violence to one side. I was jerked out by the reins of the startled horses, and, still holding on, dragged a few yards.

When I recovered my feet, I tied the horses to the fence, and returned to rescue the ladies. I asked eagerly if any one were hurt.

"I am not, fortunately," said Miss C—, wiping the snow from her face. "Nor I," said her brother, with a laugh, as he slowly arose from his tumbling struggle with robes. A groan was the third answer, and I echoed it. Aline had broken her arm, by extending it when she felt herself falling, a most natural but dangerous action.

I lifted her. She was suffering greatly, and soon became insensible. A hurried consultation took place. Miss C— was sure that if I rode for help, leaving them alone, Aline's arm would freeze, or her animation never return after the chill. Neither would either she or Mr. C— venture to mount one of my grays, while I carried Aline on the other, so it was determined that I should go on with Aline, and send help for the others.

I mounted, and the insensible girl was lifted to my arms, a robe thrown over her, and I set out at my horse's gentlest pace.

Oh! how often had I imagined the seemingly impossible moment when I should hold Aline to my heart! I suppose this train of thought made me unconsciously tighten my clasp. The pain aroused her. She sighed and said, "Oh! my arm! My position is so uncomfortable. Cannot it be made easier, aunt?"

"I am afraid not," I said, with a pang. She opened her eyes, looked up at me, and smiled, though with lips quivering with pain.

"I know no better can be done, since it is you," she said.

How hard not to let my arms, nor my eyes, nor my lips acknowledge this—but they dare not risk all to lose all—and what else could happen?

"Are my aunt and uncle safe?" she asked.

"Yes, and waiting for us to send a sleigh for them."

"Where are you taking me—home?"

"I wish it were. No, only to this farm house."

"Strangers to us, of course; but your friends, I suppose."

"No; but I am sure that in these mountains you will meet only kindness—rough, perhaps, but genuine. This gate is fortunately open. The dog will not harm you."

"You say you are going back for my aunt in a sleigh. Take me with you—do not leave me with strangers. I know it is foolish to be afraid, but I am a little so, and I may faint again at any moment. Strange faces and hands about me frighten me. Take me back with you."

"I am not then quite so far from you? I am a little nearer than an utter stranger?"

"Yes," she said, in a low, earnest tone.

"You have again and again proved yourself a friend."

"Your aunts could never so regard me. As soon as you all return to the city you will remember me no more, perhaps not so well as my horses. In a month I should be an utter stranger again."

She was silent; and a man put his head out of an upper window to ask,

"Who's dere? Down! you dunder-head dog! Be still, sir."

"Let us in—quickly. Here is a lady—hurt. Call up your boys if you've got any, and get a sleigh ready. Hurry, neighbor!"

Such a summons, which the sight of Aline in my arms enforced, brought an instant hearty response, and we heard the bustle of dressing within. They would soon be down, and this precious opportunity gone forever.

"Miss C—," I said, urged by a wild impulse, "could you ever regard me as a friend? I mean, of course, an equal friend."

"I do so now," she answered, slowly, and I could see her color rising, by the full moon-beams upon her face as she lay in my arms.

"You do not see in me only a boor, born to drudge in the soil, and never lift his eyes above it?"

She said gently, "No."

"You do not think that between us there is a great gulf fixed, which no ambition, and no desert can cross?"

Her lids lay upon her eyes. A warm blush mantled, but did not bring confusion to her face. She lifted her look slowly, calmly to mine, and said again, "No."

"You think such as I, country born and bred, uneducated, unrefined, but yet a man, and an honorable one, with some ability too—you think he should not lay his mouth in the dust before such as you, high-born, city-bred, well educated? Should he dare to stand up boldly and say, 'I love, and would marry? Should I fear to do that?'"

A pause, a tremor, then a low, but full "No."

"No," I said, with a sudden revulsion of feeling, "I should not fear to do it, but scorn to do it. It must humble a lady to marry an ignorant boor—and that I am, outwardly. And no woman shall be humbled in marrying me. She shall be made proud, or be none of mine. I will never say the words, 'Will you marry me?' to one who must look down upon me—not if I tear my heart out to prevent its cry!"

A man and woman came bustling out of the house. They took Aline, again insensible, from my arms, and placed her upon a rough settee

by the kitchen fire. I sent the men for a doctor, and for Mr. and Miss C——. Then I sat by Aline's side, bathing her forehead, and helping the women use means for her return to consciousness, but internally nursing the foolish pride which had sprung full-grown into my heart.

If Aline, with less candor, and more *finesse*, had only bade me beware of daring to address her, I should have done it forthwith. Now nothing within, nor without me could induce me to do it.

In a week from this time I was at Harrisburg. In the five years before I returned to my home I studied much, and mixed with politicians, editors, and legislators, with the social life of drawing-rooms, and the noisy life of caucuses. The *brusquerie* of my manners was soon worn off. I had a faculty for public speaking that gained me some consideration; and finally I took the stump, and won popularity.

By the death of my father I came into a large estate, rendered doubly valuable by the railroad through it. After a few months spent on the farm, during which my attention was given mostly to embellishing Willow Bottom Cottage, I returned to public life a member of the State Legislature. This was seven years from my awakening, and during that time I had never seen Aline, though I often heard of her through her uncle whom I knew well. She still resided in Philadelphia, unmarried. Knowing this kept up to its full force the "stubborn patience" of my aspiration and endeavor.

We were debating an exciting question in the House, and the day came when I was to make upon it my maiden speech as a legislator. The question had important party bearings, and the leaders of our party cautioned me, and instructed me, and tried to stimulate me to my utmost effort. I was in fact tacitly required, as the crack speaker of our side, to demolish all opponents.

I prepared myself well—so well that I felt sure no amount of confusion, or brow-beating could disconcert me. The skeleton of my speech I had by rote; and as, in stumping, no adversary, however skillful, no *contre-temps*, however absurd, had ever dashed me for a moment, I felt tolerably secure.

The evening before this all-important day I spent at a large party given by Mrs. ——. After some conversation with the ladies, I retired to an ill-lighted corner and fell into a brown study. When I lifted my eyes again, they fell upon a lady who was dancing in the set just before me. She had at that moment

exchanged places with her *vis-a-vis*, and when she returned to her partner she stood with her face from me, but so near me that I could distinguish the perfume of her bouquet. It was Miss C——, no longer a young, timid girl, but a beautiful, stately woman.

I knew that she had not seen me from the conversation which followed.

"Ah! there is a sprig of willow in your bouquet," said her partner. "Out with the ill-placed thing! It is impossible that you should ever wear the willow appropriately."

She smiled quietly at his feeble wit, and said, "That is acacia, not willow. But even if it were willow, it should stay. I like it, ever since I wore it once in the mountains."

"Ha! ha! for some mountain sheep, I suppose," he smirked.

She said nothing, but turned aside her head with a slight frown, and I saw too a little depression of the sweet, sad lip corners, which I instantly set down to her remembrance of me. It made me wild to know at once whether she would hate or forgive me. When the set was over, her partner gave her a chair close to my dim-curtained corner, and went to get her some ices. She also was partially shaded from the lights and eyes in the room, and I leaned forward to her chair and said,

"I am to speak to-morrow. Will you come to hear me?"

She was as immovable as if she had not heard a word, but I saw that the tip of her ear, and her cheek, grew scarlet. After two minutes' silence I said again, "Will you not?"

She turned to me a collected countenance, greeted me with the common forms of civility between long-parted, and not very intimate, or dear friends. Her partner then brought her the ice, and, seeing us conversing, soon left us. We talked a few minutes upon ball-room topics, while my heart was throbbing with a pain, anxiety, and irritation, which had not agitated me since I saw her last. It was not to be borne—this suspense—this foolery of common-places, when my happiness was at stake. I spoke in a low, suppressed, vehement tone, but with a carefully guarded countenance.

"You know you have been the aspiration of my youth. Will you not be the crowning blessing of my life, Aline? Seven years ago the words, 'Be my wife,' almost broke my heart in the effort to get utterance. Answer them to-night, Aline."

"Seven years ago," said she, deliberately, "you gave me little choice."

"A stern battle then raged between my love

and my stubborn pride. And pride was the master. That is the nature of hard, stern man. But woman can be more tender, less selfish. Her holy and fervent love could never be overcome by so dark a passion. Aline, seven years I have lived in hope, and to be without it now would be like doing without the breath of my nostrils."

"For seven years," she returned, quietly, "I have carefully fed my pride. For seven years I have faithfully crushed the love you saw and neglected. It has died out in my heart—entirely, I believe. You helped to starve it. You see exactly now how I must regard you."

I groaned in spirit, "Yes." I thought, "She speaks the calm, sober truth. A few minutes ago she was joking with a puppy about wearing the willow! She looks well, happy, and as if her heart were calm, and cold as a mountain lake. She looks me in the face with an unmistakable indifference. She must see by my bloodless lips what I feel, and she shares my feeling no more than that wooden pillar she leans against."

"Aline, is this final?" I groaned.

"Certainly," she replied, with cool surprise, that was like cold steel to me.

She was claimed for another dance: and I sat chewing the bitter cud of repentance. Oh! what a fool! to let pride prevent my claiming her promise seven years ago, and now coming credited to claim her hand! She owned that she had suffered, and she had had strength to bear up through it, till she had reached peace—without me! She was so frank, so cold, that I was hopeless.

I spent a night afterward as dark, and wretched as a human heart can make it. Do you suppose I dreamed of my speech?

I was quite unfit for speaking the next day, and told my friends so. But they came running from all quarters to urge me not to ruin their hopes. They laughed at my prophecies of failure. They said a word, now, would be better than a Webster oration out of season—they said the opportunity must not be lost, that they had not time to get another to speak for us instead of me: in short, I found I must do what I could. They hoped, and I did also, that when I began I would arouse with the occasion. But it was not so. My whole thought was of her, and crushed hope sickened me. If I could have seen her, and won one warm look from her, all would have been well. But though I was told she was present, she was out of sight, and, I thought, listening with a coldness that sent a chill to my own heart.

Party questions, that yesterday seemed of deepest interest and vital moment, were to-day trifles not worth caring about. I could not arouse my tongue to the faintest enthusiasm.

I soon got black looks from my party, and ironical attentions from my opponents: and though I worried through all my "heads" in due order, I uttered nothing but the veriest platitudes, and those too by the greatest effort. I then sat down, stolid and impassible, to listen to all kinds of sarcasm hissed at me from both sides of the House.

I made myself that night the butt of one party, and the execration of the other.

"You are ruined—politically," said my best friend, with a shake of the head.

But a greater blow had deadened my feeling to all this, except as it cut me off from all wish to win her. I had fought myself into position for her sake, and now, before her eyes, I felled myself by one blow. It was her doing—so be it.

That evening my friend K—— called to see me, and insisted upon my going home with him. "You were ill," he said, "it was a blunder to urge you to speak. You are ill yet. Come and hear some music—it will do your nerves good. I have a Philadelphia lady staying with me who sings divinely. Come."

"I must read the evening papers. I suppose that cursed speech will be reported. It was too good a handle against our party not to be seized by our opponents."

"Come and read them in my sanctum. You can steal away from the ladies for an hour."

We met the carrier at his door, and, taking the damp papers, I went directly to his study or smoking-room, and sat down to read the vilest abuse of myself. In about ten minutes the door opened, and, after admitting some one, was locked on the inside.

I supposed, of course, it was K——; and said, with a voice choked with indignation, "Here is even worse than I deserved, K——, and that is saying a great deal."

I heard a rustle of silk, and the next moment Aline was kneeling by my side, her forehead on my knee, tears and sobs breaking through the hands which pressed them back. I dared not trust my hope.

"Aline—this is another battle—it is pride and *pity* now. Pity has won the day, I suppose."

She drew back, her face still hidden, her sobs still uncontrollable.

"This is all pity—all? Is it?" I asked, faltering slightly.

"Pity," said she, vehemently. "No, it is

passion—a passion of anger and indignation! They made you speak when you were ill. They assail you, the cowards! with every false word they can invent. It is anger against myself too. I am not blameless of this wrong done you.”

She turned her face from me, laying her cheek against my knee, and continued hurriedly, “I, when you were ill—I saw you were—must grieve you by a lie. It was a lie, a vile one. I have not crushed the remembrance of you from my heart.”

“Ah! Aline,” I whispered, “why say that now? I am a disgraced man, and pride forbids my speaking as I spoke last night, when honor and success seemed at my beck and call.”

She rose with quiet dignity, and stood silent before me, only by her muteness urging me to retract.

I shaded my eyes with my hand to shut out temptation. She took one step from me. In alarm I sprang up and clasped her.

“Go you shall not!” I said, firmly, and perhaps fiercely. “As I am, you shall marry me!”

“And I will,” she said, in a sweet, low, plaintive cadence, that soothed my inmost soul.

“Since disgrace has brought me this compensation, it is welcome to me, Aline.”

“If it shall snatch you from the vortex of politics, it will be welcome even to me,” she said, entreatingly.

“You do not wish to see your husband a famous man?”

“I wish to see his peace unbroken, and his life mine.”

“Then I might as well have asked you seven years ago to share my obscure lot?”

“Better, better, Spenser. I blushed for seven long years at being spurned by him I loved, at the moment of his discovering that love. I wept with regret that I had been so frank.”

“You hate me for that suffering? You will never forgive me?”

“I intend to exact retribution. For every year given to politics I shall claim one for home. You will grow old too soon here. Leave this hurly-burly, and come to me.”

When my term was out I retired, and am now a man of leisure in Philadelphia, of course overworked, as all men of leisure are, with other people’s business. It does not become me to speak of the way in which I convinced my opponents that my teeth and claws were not quite extracted by my lady-love. I shall only say that I soon had the opportunity I wanted, to clear my reputation as a speaker, and to give as good as I got, which opportunity I made a use of that drew approving laughter, and not regretful dismay from her whose opinion was all in all to me.

SHOULD AND MUST.

BY CAROLINE S. WHITMARSH.

CHAPTER I.

"My dear James, don't you know there is a stronger word than *should*, and that is *must*? We *should* be angels of holiness, sell all we have and give it to the poor, and take no thought for raiment, like the birds. We *must* build up our fortunes, make a place in the world, educate our children, and keep free from debt. Let us be generous when we can: we *must* abide by our purpose."

"Very good for special pleading. It is a pity you were not the lawyer, Helen. And so this poor little Mary, with her plaintive face, a stranger among strangers, must not be invited to our party? Nell, she has three times the refinement of you or me!"

"Possibly; but she has not money, brilliancy, nor position, and we cannot afford to patronize her. Is it not rather for your interest to be known as the friend of Judge Slade, than of his children's governess?"

"Judge Slade for some cause dislikes us; he declined being introduced to you, last week, and has openly slighted me in court. He is conservative and aristocratic. I do not belong to his club, do not give brilliant dinners; and, being nothing to him, I am worse than nothing, and he means to frown me out of existence; but before heaven, he shall not! And it is because I feel so bitterly this grinding influence of power, that I would give the little help I can to other unfortunates."

"*Should*, you mean! These sentiments are very noble, James, and, some day, when we are rich, we will follow them out to the letter; but we must pursue a large policy, and by appearing selfish in the present, open wider opportunities for usefulness in the future."

"The talents buried in the napkin, rusted, Helen!"

"I will run all risks, if your conscience still demurs. It is your place to regulate affairs at the office, mine at home. Let me invite whom I choose to my drawing-room."

A little stress was laid upon the word *my*; for the father of Mrs. Lippitt had furnished, and purchased a three years' lease of the fine house in which this conversation occurred.

Slight as that accent was, it struck home; and

the young lawyer walked to his office musing, "Too true! if I cannot support the house, I have no right to dictate concerning its inmates. And after all," he pursued, "others do not help me. Why should I others? Born into this system of infernal selfishness, I must slip in the grooves, or be crushed."

CHAPTER II.

A blazing fire of cannel coal lighted the library of Judge Slade. The green, thick carpet of this room was like woodland moss; and the table-cloths, and curtains, the deep-seated sofas, and arm-chairs, were all of the same hue, in plain cloth; relieved, where need was, by borders and heavy tassels of yellow silk. Only the cloth hangings on the walls were of a rich maroon, to accord with the walnut book-cases, whose treasure gleamed in the fire-light, range above range, and within range of gloriously appareled volumes; the softest browns, the rarest purples and greens, all arabesqued with gold, the heaviest orange, and black; and the daintiest yellow, lettered in purple, and glistening like golden tomes, as indeed they were.

A large, old-fashioned chair stood empty before the fire; and at one side a group of children were gathered about Mary Lamson, a little arm around her neck, a head with fair curls sleeping against her shoulder; and a boy, the elder of the two, looked up with beaming eyes from his low seat.

"How much we all think of you, Miss Lamson! You are something like our mother, only, I suppose, any one that did not love her would call you prettier; and then——"

"Well, Harry?"

"She looked so bright, and happy; and took things in such an easy way, people thought them easy whether they were or not. Do you? What makes you sad?"

"I?"

"Yes; you remind me of a flower that hasn't any water, and so droops; and yet, somehow—well, you know that white jessamine, we brought from the green-house yesterday, was sweeter when it wilted."

"Out of the mouth of babes!" said the full,

rich voice of Judge Slade—the voice that had spoken life or death to culprits; that spoke success or victory to trembling aspirants each day. “Why, Hal, are you making love to Miss Lamson here in the twilight?”

“Oh! father, the letters! I promised William to put them into your own hand,” and flaxen curls, starting from her dreams, bounded across the room in search of a mail entrusted to her care.

“Look, a whole bushel! One, two, four, six, seven, and this is such a nice one. May I have the envelope? See how good it smells!”

“Yes, puss, the envelope and the billet both. Those Lippitts,” he pursued, somewhat scornfully.

“James Lippitt: then you know him?” ventured Mary, who, to speak the truth, admired Judge Slade as one does a mountain, with awe.

“Then *you* know him? Did your invitation come with mine? Perhaps you would like to accept? Give me back the note, Jessie; let’s see if I have an engagement.” As he spoke thus, aloud, his heart was saying to himself, “Poor child, she has not many friends, and that lone face of hers looks as if she had lost her way into this world.”

“I have a slight acquaintance with Mr. Lippitt,” answered the governess. “He was my mother’s friend.”

“It will give me pleasure to escort you to the party.”

“You are very kind, Judge Slade; but for several reasons I cannot think of going; one is—I am not invited.”

She uttered the words so demurely that Harry laughed. But the judge frowned.

“A piece of their snobbishness! Because you are a governess, I suppose. Because you are so far above these children, as to be capable of instructing them, you are not admitted where they would be welcomed eagerly! What a world! But we will stay at home for a game of chess.”

“Or, maybe, Miss Lamson will sing to us,” outspoke Jessie, who dreaded the chess-board.

“Yes, sir, I will remain at home, and play chess if you wish. But, forgive me, I think you are wrong—that is—Mr. Lippitt has been kind to me, and Mrs. Lippitt gracious. They probably forgot, or their rooms are small, or they preferred me to come with some different circle of friends.”

“Very sweet and good of you, Miss Lamson. What is that, Harry, the white jessamine is more fragrant when they leave it to wilt? We must look after you, or you will be writing verses. Now,” settling himself in the deep

chair, and extending his feet for Jessie to clothe with velvet slippers, which she had been warming, “now these Lippitts are a sort of persons I am wicked enough to despise; and a terrible crowd of such there are, too, in the world, pushing their way up over others’ shoulders, living only for appearance, ambitious only for success, nothing deep, calm, true—nothing manly or womanly about their lives.”

“Oh! Judge Slade! ‘Even the angels dared not bring a railing accusation against him!’” She looked a pleading angel.

“It is my province to judge, you know, and I may be forgiven. I have noted them well: indifferently born and educated, and poor also, they inhabit a great house in Chester Square; furnished with every color in the rainbow, I dare vouch, and every texture the round world provides. Vases, pictures, cabinets, and stuffed silken sofas, that ought to be put into plain, sheep-covered law-books. I despise such pretension, and the worse that Lippitt has some little ability.”

Mary’s face lighted. “I am glad you think so; his education was acquired under the greatest difficulties, and he is, I know, a conscientious student still.”

“Ah?”

“I have heard my brother say that he is given, heart and soul, to his profession, and studies into the small hours of each night; and that his wife encourages the sacrifice.”

“Ah?” and Judge Slade relapsed into reverie. Had he always listened attentively, as in bare justice bound, to this man’s pleas; or, laboriously and skillfully as they were construed, had they fallen on prejudiced ears? No one else would have asked the question; for our judge was a man of probity and honor; but the heart discovereth its own failings. Never so old, never so wise are we, and so true, but there come sudden lights into our minds that show us weak where we felt most secure, and sinful where we deemed ourselves most virtuous.

“Miss Lamson, we will attend this party.”

“Oh! but——”

“You feel that the Lippitts only forgot you. We will go to assure them of your existence, and that you are not friendless; and—you understand my reason for accepting the invitation?”

He looked at Mary with his keen eyes: he looked with keener eyes than she supposed. Deep student of character, he knew her to be wounded by this slight, were it intentional or not—he knew her to be as proud as the Lippitts were vain and ambitious; and he would sound

again the sweet forgiveness of her nature, of which he had already witnessed proofs.

"They desire a judge's name on their visiting list; and the judge will not stir without Miss Lamson."

"Then, of course, I am at your service, if——"

He understood her hesitancy, and remarked, "There will be enough of point lace and diamonds at this party in Chester Square; it is a famous placer for such deposits; but you and I, who wear our jewels within, have no need of such distinctions. I hope you will oblige me by dressing in simple white, Miss Lamson."

Tears would rush into Mary's eyes; he always foresaw and provided thus for her deficiencies, this great judge, this emperor among men! But she bent over Jessie, and whispered some words about bed time, and the tears fell into the flaxen curls unnoticed.

By all save Judge Slade.

CHAPTER III.

"JUDGE SLADE at a party in Chester Square!" cried Will Howard to his friend, as they stood together, in a corner of Mrs. Lippitt's rooms, "Jove, I call that jolly! Ralph Waldo Emerson at a Fifth Avenue soiree were nothing to it; it is Coriolanus asking votes of the Roman citizens."

"The judge is a widower now, Will; maybe the lone dove seeks another mate."

"Not here. The eagle must have his eagle; or, if you like, the dove his dove."

"I think he has found her, faith! Did you see? No, you did not, or would never have noticed him—that lady with whom he had the long conversation? She is as out of place in fashionable life as he: a lily among tulips and poppies. They looked together—she in her airy white dress—and he all radiant, and drowned in delight at watching her—like the moon with a halo encircling it."

"Is she handsome?"

"The word is too unpoetical. She's one of those moonbeam women, that you pity and envy, and fear and love at once; so good and so ethereal you feel evil could never touch them, but would cut impotently through their thin shroud of earthiness, like the sword through Ossian's ghosts."

"Where is the wonder? It is not like the judge to appropriate her in this way; and give no one else a chance."

"You selfish Adonis! with half the women in Boston smiling on you, longing to take away the one ewe lamb!"

Adonis shook the curls from his forehead of snow, and laughed, "Fancy the rugged judge, now, drooping for love!"

"We know he can be blessed by love; the dear old fellow, with his heart of gold! The most successful coquette I ever knew—and that means the quickest detector of character—was fond of saying that no man short of fifty is capable of loving. The judge is only too young. There—there!" He lowered his voice, suddenly, as if a bird had flown in sight; and when Miss Lamson had passed, whispered, "Now, did I overpraise her?"

"No, by all that's sweet and sad! Harry, you think I am heartless, but there is a woman with whose affections I would not trifle: genuine to the depths—how I pity her!"

"For her genuineness?"

"Yes, in part. Don't you see how unarmed she walks in this world of lies? But pshaw! one can't talk metaphysics at a party. Let us obtain an introduction."

CHAPTER IV.

"Yes, my dear Mrs. Lippitt, by all means I will be presented; so many brilliant beings, though! One is dazzled, and does not know where to choose," and Adonis shaded his eyes with a white hand.

"Let me decide: there is Miss Lascelle, a most charming girl, and an own niece of Senator Windbug."

Adonis, *sotto voce*, "A snob, and the niece of a snob;" then aloud, "True, but one becomes tired of splendors; where is the nymph in white? Is she engaged for the supper-room?"

"Mary Lamson? Yes, oh! yes, I suppose so. You see, Mr. Bradford, her coming was altogether a mistake: an excellent person, but not one to make a party brilliant."

The white temples flushed with indignation. "She is the pearl of this assembly, Mrs. Lippitt!"

"Ah? I am charmed that you find a pearl here: and you gentlemen are so eccentric! I shall tell Miss Lamson, poor thing! it will cheer her. She is only a governess, and came this evening with Judge Slade, in whose family she resides. You see the lady in cherry and gold—there, by the mirror? Upon my word, Mr. Bradford, she nodded just now toward you, as signal for an introduction. You cannot refuse. She is the diamond of the assembly."

"The ruby, one would say, or," (*sotto voce*) "the red glass."

And the humming-bird, with feathers of cherry and gold, Adonis fed her with sweets

from the table of Mrs. Lippitt. And Mary Lamson, left alone and forgotten, as she thought, waited till half the company were gone; then, with a sudden effort, joined the gay stream, and unnoticed found her way to the vicinity, but not the presence, of her friend, Judge Slade. She was freezing for sympathy among these strangers.

Did he know it? Had he observed the whole movement? Ah, an old man meeting old friends, and a grave man touching grave subjects, how should he keep on his mind the sensibilities of a poor little governess?

The judge turned suddenly, Adonis had whispered something in his ear. "Hush, you rash fellow! If we accept their hospitality, we must not insult them. And then, human nature is human nature, count it three or thirty generations back. I am truly pleased, in a way, with this glitter and glow of young life—I have enjoyed the evening."

"Bravo, judge! You are as many years younger than I in heart, as I than you in literal seeming. But who is this charmer of yours in the white robes?—neither glitter nor glow about her."

"Is she not charming? Now, that is my taste, and I'm glad you like it," the judge said, heartily. "Let me present you to her, she is sweet as she looks."

And in another moment, Adonis bent over the chair of Mary Lamson, conversing with graceful tact, and casting deep glances into her surprised eyes—eyes which had tears and smiles in them, for in her humility she felt his coming to be pure kindness, on his own part or that of the judge.

After supper, Adonis brought his friend, and the judge, from afar, looked on both with an approbation which all saw excepting Mary.

Mrs. Lippitt, quick to take a cue, approached with most flattering attentions; and her husband, now first perceiving his friend, out of the honest goodness of his heart, came also, and spoke of old times, and home, and thanked her for her presence there, till she was at ease and happy.

CHAPTER V.

THE green and golden library again, the blazing fire, the books, the judge in his chair; the group of children, and Mary in their midst. There had been a pause in the soft, warm twilight of the room.

But Jessie, always the first to speak, and always rising into notice suddenly as an evening-primrose opens, Jessie rose now with,

"Miss Lamson, do you mean to marry that handsome Mr. Bradford?"

"No," outspoke Harry, from his favorite seat on the hearth-rug, "she will wait till I am old enough. Oh! why wasn't I born earlier?" and the child's eyes glowed like a seraph's.

"Nonsense, Harry! She will grow herself all the while, and be an old wrinkled lady when you are a man; but, dear Miss Lamson, why can't you take father, he is grown-up already, and you know how good he is, and then you might live with us always? Couldn't she, father?"

The judge nervously seized a newspaper to screen his eyes, and said from behind it, "To be sure—that is—I hope Miss Lamson will—not leave us at present."

"Leave you, oh, no! this house is more like home than any other." She was less timid than of old.

And the good, great heart of the judge spoke, still from behind his paper, "If Miss Lamson ever marries, Jessie, we will celebrate the wedding here; and have such a glorious time as shall make us forget we are losing her."

"But we cannot lose her, we can't!" and Jessie's arms tightened about the neck of her governess, till the fair curls touched her cheek; and Harry smiled upon her with his gleaming eyes; and behind his newspaper the good, great heart of the judge was beating as never boy's heart beat; and with the soft, warm twilight of the room there came another pause.

"Yes, Mr. Bradford is beautiful as Adonis," Mary's heart was whispering, "but so are statues and pictures; if some one with a soul as goodly as his face, could love me as he loves, I would not care how rough even his exterior, I would not care though he were old as—as——"

"Yes, she is lovely as a dream," the judge's heart was whispering, "and I rejoice that a younger, richer man will make her happy: she is too fair and too ethereal for me. And yet, poor Jessie! it will be a dismal home without Miss Lamson."

"If I were a man and a prince," the heart of Harry was whispering, "I would build her a palace better than Aladdin's, I'd stud the windows with stars, and cover the couches with flower-petals, and make pavements of jewels."

Then suddenly, flaxen curls, speaking aloud, opened another bud of thought.

"Miss Lamson," she said, "you did not tell if you'd marry father."

"Chatterbox!" laughed Judge Slade, and arose from his chair. "What does Miss Lamson

want with a rough, old man like me? I am her father, if she will but call me so; and you all are children together."

"Past bed time, Jessie!" and once more tears fell into the flaxen curls, as Mary departed with her charge.

And the "old" judge saw it and wondered; his knowledge of human nature did not serve him now. He slept well that night, for a difficult case was pending, and he needed his freshest powers; but on the morrow between weighty thoughts he was wondering still;

"And the lawyers smiled that afternoon,
When he hummed in the court an old love tune."

CHAPTER VI.

MARY LAMSON was an orphan with parents, and friendless with troops of friends. Delicate, refined, good as we have seen her, too delicate and sensitive perhaps; her kindred were merry, matter-of-fact, unscrupulous beings, blind to all delicate shadings of beauty, propriety, and right; and constantly in her way while she dwelt among them. In her way with advice, assistance, comfort, praise; and she in theirs as well; and thus as many a woman does when proud enough to lack a narrow outward pride, and wise enough to take her destiny into her own hands, she left her comfortable village home, and procured the situation in which we find her, as governess.

Never anywhere at home in all her life, never from any one receiving sympathy; discouraged, always circumvented and expostulated with in what she rightly deemed her most beautiful instincts and noblest aspirations; it is not wonderful that a shadow fell early on her soul, and was reflected in her gentle face.

And in this new home, this home at last, which was ruled by the law of love, where aspiration found encouragement and aid, and sympathies were warmly met and nurtured, where the tenderness of childhood, the ripe wisdom of maturity, and all the sweet amenities of social life were gathered about our poor little governess; no wonder if the shadow left her youthful face, and left her soul.

And Adonis was kneeling at her feet.

CHAPTER VII.

ALL had gone ill with the Lippitts since their memorable party. The father-in-law had died a bankrupt, the house even not secured to his daughter; and various other expenses increased beyond proportion to their means. Mrs. Lip-

pitt, still anxious to preserve appearances, devoted her days and months to economy; and rarely allowed herself to speak a frank and honest word for fear of betraying all. And the husband passed watchful nights among his books, and harassed days amidst duns, and wondered how it all would end.

There came at length an important case, involving great risk to his client, and, in the event of success, great gain to the lawyer; and James Lippitt worked now with the energy of desperation; night after night his lamp burned on till dawn, and day was like the night for all he knew of human interest. And again and again he murmured in despair, "If the judge only knew—if he were just!"

The judge knew more, and was juster than he deemed. It was in the close of this very case, that Judge Slade willed to sleep soundly in the midst of his love-maze, and defer all his dreaming till evening came with the twilight and easy chair; nor did his quick eye lose, as he turned from a chat with Adonis, the sunken cheek and eager countenance of Lippitt. As the able defence proceeded, his close attention and kindling eye impressed the jury, but encouraged the friendless lawyer more, till his thoughts flashed forth in sentences nervous, compact, glowing with eloquence. And the case was won: though right had seemed trembling in the balance—his case was won; his present embarrassments were over, his future rose bright and clear. Men who had passed him by unnoticed yesterday, pressed forward with warm congratulations; and among them Judge Slade. Not by the fine house in Chester Square, not by assemblies of brilliant prattlers, not by his life of pretension and unreality; but by the margin of genuine work and woe, the midnight vigils, the despairing, yet desperate will and industry—by these he had carved out the *must*.

"Miss Lamson was ever so glad your father gained his case," said Jessie Slade, one day, in the presence of Mrs. Lippitt; and addressing that lady's daughter, Isabel. "Miss Lamson was always taking his part, and telling how hard he worked, and how he supported his old mother—when my father said he was not gentleman—I forget the word."

"A genius!" suggested Mrs. Lippitt.

"No, ma'am, something with *in* about it; oh! genuine!"

Mr. and Mrs. Lippitt exchanged glances, and there ended the lady's discussion of should and must.

And when Mary Lamson married, it was not

at the judge's house; though the wedding was brilliant, and Jessie and Harry were bridesmaid and groomsman. Adonis sent for the bride a service of silver. And the bridegroom, who else could he be but Judge Slade? And where else could be the future home, but her first one in all this earth, the green and golden library?

There the fire is blazing brightly now; and

Harry sits at his mother's feet and dreams of fairy palaces; and the judge leans back in his easy-chair and contemplates his wife, who is still a wonder and mystery, in that she married him; and Jessie's curls touch her cheek; and as there comes another of those blissful pauses into the soft, warm twilight of the room, an artist might paint them for his Holy Family.

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THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A CORK-LEG.

BY ELLA RODMAN.

LOOKING-GLASSES have made their "reflections," chairs have attempted outlines of their "impressions," and even inkstands have, with much propriety, dabbled in literature; but cork-legs have never been given to talking, either of themselves or of others; to me, therefore, belongs the honor of bringing the race into notice.

I have no particular recollections respecting the period of my birth—indeed, I have more reason than "Topsy" to "spect that I growed;" but I believe that I slept until, with a sort of yawn, I awoke to the consciousness of existence, and the busy world around me. The first thing that struck me particularly was my own exquisite beauty; my shape was perfect, slender, but beautifully rounded—while the bend at my knee was natural enough to deceive a leg of flesh and blood. Quickly following upon this discovery was a feeling of superiority to all my companions; they were well enough, to be sure, the productions of the same hand—but I was the pearl of legs, the crowning work of my inventor—modeled in a moment of inspiration, and worked upon and polished off with great care and tenderness, for I was the favorite child of his genius.

Notwithstanding my attractions, however, I passed through a monotony of many weeks, still occupying the same quarters; while my common-place companions were walked off to begin their adventures. I panted for distinction, but I was particular respecting the means that led to it. I scorned the idea of being shackled to some coarse, vulgar body, no, indeed! I had made up my mind that I would belong only to some delicate, unfortunate lady, or a slender, refined man. And, in truth, I was only fitted for such; stout people and short people were obliged to discard me; after trying in vain to associate our uncongenial natures, they shook their heads and gave it up in despair; and one disappointed fat man, I believe, almost cried over me.

In the course of time, however, I found a master; one, too, after my own heart.

A plain, but handsome carriage stopped, one morning, before the door of my prison, and a gentleman and lady, one very distinguished-looking, the other rather common-place in

appearance, entered the room of which I knew, by this time, every crack in the ceiling. I appropriated the gentleman at first sight, for he walked heavily with a cane, and I felt that my time had come.

I was produced at once, for any one could see, at a glance, that we were made for each other; and, after a short examination, I was purchased by my new master. I felt really proud of the figure I helped to support, and thankful to be transported to a more exciting sphere.

But, in order to explain properly how this came about, it is necessary to go back a little. Not that I would, by any means, claim the gift of ubiquity; but from conversation which occurred after my entrance into active service, and a certain readiness at "putting that and that together," I became aware of the circumstances.

"You remember our conversation by the library fire?" was a question so frequently repeated during those early weeks of my new life, that I kept all my energies awake to find out what the conversation alluded to was; but it was not long before I discovered that I had been the subject of it, and, after a short sojourn, I understood matters and things thoroughly.

I was surprised, although considerably relieved, to discover that the stout, fresh-looking lady, who answered to the name of Rebecca, was not the wife of my handsome master; and much more to my astonishment, this disinterested female, instead of employing her excellent opportunities to her own advantage, might be said actually to worry Mr. Mowerton to go forth and seek a wife elsewhere. She called him "Herbert," and I believe there was some distant cousinship between them; but they seemed to feel more like brother and sister, having been much together from earliest childhood.

For some years, Herbert Mowerton had been alone. When his father died, in the same old counting-house which had been Herbert's home ever since, his last near relative was gone; and lately, the old housekeeper, who had hectored him for so many years, that he could not remember the beginning of her away, had followed her old master.

Herbert's life was one of disappointment. Young, handsome, and ardent, he had longed to distinguish himself, and win a name to be entwined with the history of his country. This it was that took him to Mexico; but at the very outset of his career, a cannon-ball shattered his leg, and he returned home, a disappointed, crippled invalid. His wealth gave him no enjoyment—society was painful to him—and he was fast sinking into a gloomy misanthrope. Various substitutes for the lost limb had been tried in vain; they only increased his sufferings; and unable to endure them for any length of time, he threw them aside, and looked sadly forward to the life of a disfigured and useless cripple.

Rebecca Knorr was one of those admirable characters whom the world passes by with indifference, and yet which it could, by no means, dispense with. As free from the slightest taint of selfishness as it is possible for an erring mortal to be, she diffused the sunshine of her presence around on all with whom she came in contact; apparently looking upon the world as a great hospital, in which it was her office to bind up the wounds, soothe the suffering, and comfort the sorrowful. She did all this so naturally and quietly, that people actually persuaded themselves they had a *right* to call upon Rebecca Knorr on all occasions requiring energy and self-denial; and she went pleasantly from one task to another, a Sister of Charity in all but the name.

Even Herbert Mowerton, with all his refinement and fastidiousness, experienced a sort of mesmeric influence in Rebecca's presence and counsels; and in his new trouble, he sent a pathetic letter to his old playmate, beseeching her to come to his assistance. She lost no time in obeying the summons; and this brings us to the conversation by the library fire.

A very cosy place was that library. It was curtained and furnished with red, and had always a glowing fire of anthracite coal, that cast a cheerful light on the well-filled bookshelves, and soft-cushioned chairs and lounges; and so well did it suit my ideas of "what was what," that, when my master was not disposed to linger in this pleasant room, I always put in a remonstrance, in the shape of inconvenient bends, or *un-bends*, that usually produced the desired effect for a time, at least.

It happened to be a rainy day; and Herbert Mowerton, like most men who have no particular occupation, did not know what to do with himself. (This was before I came upon the stage.) He paced the room, looked out of all the windows, took down books and put them up

again; and finally, in despair, he threw himself upon a lounge, and fell to studying Rebecca Knorr.

Hers was not a face, however, in which there was much to study; and Herbert found himself wishing that she had been younger and prettier. There was something irritating to his restlessness in the quiet way in which she pursued her knitting, (something for him, too, but that is man's gratitude!) and he presently burst forth upon the subject of his troubles.

Rebecca had said that she could not stay much longer; and he was enlarging upon the difficulties of getting a new housekeeper.

"I would get one of a different pattern, this time," observed Miss Knorr, significantly.

"I have no doubt that I shall!" groaned Herbert; "I should only be too thankful for a second edition of poor, old Mrs. Rinkle!"

"Poor, old Mrs. Rinkle" had been a dreadful scold; but like many another who has little deserved it, at her death she was canonized a saint.

"I meant a *wife*!" explained Rebecca, seeing that her meaning was quite misunderstood.

"A wife!" repeated Herbert, in astonishment; then he added more bitterly, "No, no, Rebecca—no woman whom I would have for a wife would have a poor, maimed, cripple like me for a husband—I am doomed to live and die *alone*."

He turned his face away in sadness, for he had read of such things in books—he had seen his friends with beautiful and loving women lighting up their firesides—and he had dreamed that such blessedness had come to him—but he put it aside as only a dream.

Then good Rebecca, who was very matter-of-fact, touched with pity for the despairing tone and saddened face, tried to cheer him in her own quaint way; and she told him a wonderful story of a wonderful man, a friend of hers, who, meeting with more mishaps than usually fall to the lot of ordinary mortals, lost successively a leg, two arms, an eye, part of his scalp, and something in the region of his throat, (not knowing how much of this useful organ can conveniently be dispensed with, I have wisely forborne to particularize Miss Knorr's statement,) but far from allowing these little accidents to interfere with his matrimonial prospects, he went boldly forward and married the prettiest girl in the place!

Herbert laughed for some time, rather to Rebecca's mystification, for the good soul had related this marvelous experience with a perfectly grave face; but she was glad to see

that her companion's melancholy had disappeared.

"Yes," she continued, with a bright smile, "get one of those new cork-legs, brush up your agreeableness a little, and then go forth into the world to conquer. I prophesy that your reward will be a sweet, young wife, who will soon make you forget that you were ever weary of life. Perhaps she may even like the old maid, Rebecca Knorr, a little—and then what pleasant times we can have together!"

Herbert smiled somewhat sadly, as he replied, "You know, Rebecca, that I have tried these artificial substitutes, and with what success. There is something so revolting, too, in the idea of art *personally*."

"That depends altogether upon circumstances," said Rebecca, energetically. "Do you suppose that, if, by some misfortune, I lost every hair on my head, I should make such a fool of myself as to go about with a bald and shining pate, because forsooth! I despised 'art'?"

The idea of Rebecca Knorr in such a predicament brought vividly before her companion the picture of a sleek monk, in those days when all good cheer paid toll at the convents. He smiled, in spite of himself; and Rebecca continued triumphantly,

"No, indeed; I should provide myself with a good wig without loss of time—but if people admired it, and were in danger of being deceived by it, I should tell them, at once, that it was an artificial embellishment."

"You are a brave woman," said Herbert, amused by her energetic manner.

"No," replied Rebecca, "only a truthful one. But that," she continued, briskly, "is neither here nor there—I am determined that you shall try one of those cork-legs. I am sure that you would like them; for they are very light, and at the same time strong."

Herbert was not very hopeful; but he suffered himself to be persuaded to a trial, and the result has already been told.

Weeks passed, and we got on admirably together, Herbert Mowerton was a different man; and Rebecca noted the change with triumph. No longer gloomy and desponding, he began to enjoy life, and to see beauty in everything around him. He had even evinced symptoms that the monotony of country life was becoming tiresome; and Rebecca, who considered him her own especial *protégé*, and formed various plans for his happiness, proposed that he should emerge from his retirement and go into society.

"He had better," she said, "take up his

quarters, for the winter, at some hotel in the city; he could there see the world in miniature, and be drawn from himself."

This, however, was a formidable step for one who had so long been a quiet recluse; but Rebecca was resolute, and returned to the charge again and again with praiseworthy perseverance.

"How can I possibly get along without *you*?" exclaimed Herbert, in a sort of comical distress, and actually shrinking from the idea of being set adrift in this way without Rebecca's good, sound sense to guide him.

"Oh!" she replied, laughing, "I will write you a book of directions, with special rules for critical occasions."

Herbert was decidedly more yielding than usual, and Rebecca talked on with fresh vigor; until, at length, just to get rid of her tongue, he said, he promised to follow her advice. I was very glad that he had arrived at this determination; for, to tell the truth, I was rather tired of the country, and, besides, I felt extremely anxious to see at whose feet I would be required to kneel.

Early in October, the little household was broken up; Rebecca Knorr going off to some other unfortunate family—while Herbert Mowerton and I, his now indispensable appendage, took up our abode in a neighboring city.

This hotel life was gay and pleasant; people seemed to have nothing to do but amuse themselves, and go on and on in an endless whirl of dissipation that was infinitely delightful. I watched jealously for the fiat of public opinion upon my master; and I soon discovered that we were entitled to hold up our head (I am sorry to say that there was but one between us) with the best of them.

They pronounced him "very interesting"—the golden halo reflected from his hundreds of thousands may have contributed to this; but the pallor of suffering still lingered upon his handsome features, and as I exerted myself faithfully to do my part, anything extraordinary in his gait was scarcely perceptible. Instead of being *neglected* by the community, he was rather troublesomely courted. Plausible widows paid him little attentions that were quite touching—ladies of an uncertain age were wreathed with smiles at his approach—but I must confess that the *very* young ones were not so assiduous.

Prudent mammas would frequently say, "Cora, my dear, play that new piece of yours for Mr. Mowerton," or "Anna, love, Mr. Mowerton speaks to you,"—but the Coras and Annas

were somewhat absent in his society, and turned with alacrity to the first sprig of young America, with moustache and buff-colored gloves, that presented itself. Perhaps it was this very thing that fixed Herbert Mowerton's attention upon the star of them all.

A white-robed figure, with golden hair waving like rippled sunshine, and large, violet eyes, that looked purity itself, glided into the drawing-room, at a late hour, during one of the hops; and Herbert Mowerton, from his quiet corner, intently scanned this beautiful apparition.

She was leaning on the arm of a coarse-looking woman, many years her senior, who served as an admirable foil to the ethereal lightness of the young beauty. Mr. Mowerton kept his eyes fixed upon her during the time that she remained, and watched all her movements. She did not dance, she glided among the crowd, looking like a visitor from another sphere; but, once, she sat down at the piano and seemed to pour out her very soul in song, whose tender melancholy fairly thrilled the heart of her silent admirer.

She disappeared like a dream, at an aristocratically early hour; and Herbert Mowerton sat bewildered, almost doubting whether he had not been rapt in a vision. His first act, on coming to his senses, was to learn her name; and "Bertha Carleton" was repeated by him again and again, as though he would engrave those letters on his heart.

It was sometime before he obtained another glimpse of the face that had fascinated him; and when he saw her again, there was the same air of quiet unconsciousness about her, as though she fancied herself quite alone in the midst of a crowd. But Herbert could not remain satisfied with beholding his divinity at a distance; and he soon obtained an introduction to Miss Carleton.

She received him quietly and indifferently; and somewhat spoiled by the attentions that had been lavished upon him, he was piqued by her manner, and exerted himself to show her that the introduction was worth having. He was interesting, eloquent, brilliant; and yet she listened with a calm smile that was infinitely provoking—it seemed to say that she had seen agreeable people before.

But this was the very way to captivate Herbert Mowerton; and, every time they met, he became more deeply interested. She was not only beautiful, but there was something unique in her beauty, different from anything he had ever seen. Always dressed in white, there was a Madonna-like repose about her that reminded

him of pictures of saints; and, before long, he bowed at her shrine in perfect adoration.

A silent looker-on can often see into things that escape the notice of those more interested; and somehow or other, Bertha Carleton did not convey to me the idea of a pure, unworldly being. I had seen a gleam of triumph in those blue orbs, as they sank beneath her lover's gaze; and I knew that the heart enshrined in that statue-like casket was throbbing with exultation.

Herbert seized the earliest opportunity to declare his love, scarcely daring to expect a return. What then was his rapturous surprise, when Bertha told him, in trembling accents, that she had loved him from the first!

The hour that succeeded flew on enchanted wings; and then the lover, unable to keep his happiness to himself, wrote to Rebecca Knorr an entire account of all that had transpired since his first meeting with Bertha. Rebecca smiled a little, when she read this epistle, and "hoped they would be happy."

Herbert now rejoiced in his wealth, since it enabled him to shower on Bertha, who had frankly told him that she was penniless, costly baubles and glittering ornaments, that seemed to him so much dross in comparison with her merits. "Tell me, dear Bertha," he would write, when enclosing, perhaps, a set of diamonds, "tell me if there is anything that I can do for you."

Surely, such love would ennoble almost any woman. And how did Bertha Carleton receive it?

Herbert was almost broken-hearted at the idea of parting with his beloved for a short time; but Bertha was firm against all his arguments, and insisted upon returning home with her aunt, who lived at some distance from the city, to make the necessary preparations for the wedding. She would write to him, she said, and tell him when he might join her; and the lover was obliged to submit.

But after one or two reveries upon the subject, Mr. Mowerton resolved to give his lady-love a pleasant surprise; and in what I considered an extremely abrupt and flighty manner, he gathered together a few necessaries, and entering the cars unobserved, took a seat immediately behind the two ladies.

There he sat, waiting for Bertha to turn around and recognize him; but she was too much absorbed in talking to do anything of the kind. The very first remark arrested Herbert's attention, and he soon became spell-bound to the spot.

"Well, Bertha," observed the older lady, "you *have* managed to secure a lover *this* time!"

"Part of one, you mean," said Bertha.

"Very true—but then half a loaf, my child, is better than no bread. It is wonderful how nicely you managed it; he is *very* devoted, too, poor fellow!"

"Very," rejoined the young lady, dryly, "rather troublesomely so. Of course," she continued, "I do not care a pin for the man, but I *do* care for his money; and when we are married, I shall enjoy the world, and leave him to his stupid books."

Poor Herbert! this was a cruel blow. I felt him trembling like an aspen-leaf, and his face was perfectly colorless; but there was a strange glare in the dark eyes that Bertha Carleton suddenly encountered—and, with that indignant gaze still fixed upon her, Herbert Mowerton passed before her into the next car.

She shrank beneath his look, and her face was as pale as his; but in that almost imploring expression there was no regret for the heart she had trampled on—only sorrow for the loss of the wealth that had slipped from her grasp. She never crossed Herbert Mowerton's path again.

On reaching the first station, Herbert took a return train, and was whirled back to the city.

Herbert Mowerton went back to his country home with his broken hopes and wounded heart. Rebecca Knorr came to him again, grieved and indignant; and she was so kind and sympathizing, that, after a few days spent in thinking the matter over, Herbert came to the conclusion that he had made a great mistake in expecting to find a loving, domestic wife in a city beauty; and very much surprised was our friend, Rebecca, at the turn which his thoughts suddenly took.

They were sitting together again in the library; there was no fire now, for it was summer, but the room was no less pleasant, with its open windows, through which came the flower-scented breeze.

"Rebecca," said Herbert, solemnly, "I have a great favor to ask of you."

Now Rebecca was at that identical moment engaged in hemming a table-cloth, a most uncongenial occupation at which to be made love to: such an idea was, however, as far as possible from her thoughts, and she answered very innocently,

"Granted, before it is asked. Nothing very formidable, I hope?"

"Yes," was the reply, "I want you to become my wife."

Rebecca let the table-cloth fall from her hands in sheer amazement, and gazed at Herbert as if trying to discover whether he had taken leave of his senses.

"Yes, Rebecca," he continued, "*you* know me just as I am—a querulous cripple, perhaps, but not insensible to kindness and affection. That I have always received from you—you are just the wife I need—and again I ask you if you will marry me!"

She looked at him a moment longer; yes, he certainly was serious about it, and she laughed outright.

Rebecca Knorr's laughing was no slight matter, she did it so heartily; but noticing the cloud on Herbert's face, she said kindly,

"Do not misunderstand me, Herbert; 'I laugh at the idea of your turning to poor, dowdyish me, because you have been deceived by a heartless woman. You do not know *what* you want—but I know that you don't want *me*. You made a mistake, on one side, by selecting a brilliant belle; but *now* you are going just as far on the other side. No, no, Herbert—what you *do* want, is something between the two; and take courage, for I feel sure that you will find her yet."

Rebecca said this so positively that Herbert supposed she must be right; but he cared very little what became of him just then.

It was a settled maxim with Rebecca Knorr that every one ought to be in bed by ten o'clock; but it had struck twelve, and Herbert Mowerton still sat in my favorite room, gazing steadily out into the night. It was a few days after he had offered himself to Rebecca Knorr; and he smiled bitterly as he thought of the ill success of his wooing. He would give up all such dreams for the future; it had been folly in him ever to think of any other successor to poor Mrs. Rinkle but a common-place housekeeper, who did her work and received her wages; and if nothing happened on the morrow, he would himself go to the village in quest of one.

My master's rest, that night, was very much disturbed; and early in the morning he went off for a solitary ride, by way of composing his spirits.

But everything seemed to be against him; there had been a heavy rain the day before, and the horse found it hard work; when suddenly, he twisted his foot, and came to a stand still. Mr. Mowerton very composedly dismounted, and began leading the perverse quadruped. He appeared to be rather pleased than otherwise; it harmonized with the tone of his feelings to have this discomfort added to the

rest; and with eyes fixed upon the ground, he proceeded slowly along until he entered upon a narrow footpath, bordered on both sides by masses of mud.

A lady was approaching from the opposite direction; and Mr. Mowerton had just collected his thoughts sufficiently to discover that the dry path was not broad enough for two, when, to his great distress, he perceived that she had already stepped into the mud, and waited for him to pass her.

She was a very agreeable-looking young girl, with an appearance of perfect health; and having recognized Mr. Mowerton at once, she instantly decided that a stand in the mud would prove much more serious for him than for her.

"You do not remember me, Mr. Mowerton?" said she, smiling upon his bewilderment.

It was just possible that he did not, for ten years had elapsed since he saw her; and Annie Dimpleton, one of the Rector's half dozen daughters, had changed, in that time, from a child of ten to a young woman of twenty. Annie had spent those ten years in a distant city with a rich relative, who had given her every advantage of education and society; but the frank, brown eyes, that Mr. Mowerton had praised in her childhood, retained the same sweet, unworldly expression, and gradually her identity dawned upon him.

"Miss Dimpleton!" he exclaimed, in much embarrassment, "I hope you will believe that, had I perceived you in time, I would not have permitted this?"

Now Annie was a sensible girl, as well as a kind-hearted one; and the reader is not to suppose that she still remained standing in the mud; no, indeed, she had landed on *terra firma* some time since, and she now replied frankly, "I know that you did not see me—but I am most unromantically blessed with good health, and a momentary acquaintance with the mud will not injure me in the least."

Mr. Mowerton was endeavoring to recall the "little Annie" of former days, but she had acquired so many new charms that it was a difficult task. The face, shaded by a simple straw bonnet, although not beautiful, was, nevertheless, attractive from its youth and intelligence; and Annie became somewhat embarrassed by his protracted gaze. Herbert saw this, and said, as he remembered his horse,

"Your kindness, Miss Dimpleton, encourages me to offer the usual beggar's petition, to 'help a poor man,' and if you can direct me to some one who understands repairing lame horses, you will increase my obligations to you."

Annie was one of those persons who always know exactly what is necessary to know; and having directed him to a place, which, fortunately, happened to be near, she pursued her homeward route.

Rebecca Knorr was informed of this adventure; but, being a wise woman on such occasions, she said nothing. She did, however, make an early call at the Rector's, whose family she considered that she had neglected very much of late; and she mentally pronounced Annie the flower of the flock of daughters who came into the parlor to entertain her.

The worthy spinster talked eloquently of Herbert Mowerton's trials and loneliness; and the good Rector, who remembered that Herbert's father had been a faithful churchwarden, made him an early visit, and invited him warmly to the rectory. Mr. Mowerton speedily availed himself of this invitation, and soon found a visit there an excellent cure for low spirits.

A little circumstance, trifling in itself, but singular in the way of coincidence, happened, one evening, when Rebecca and her *protege* were taking tea at the rectory. They played "Consequences," and when the pieces of paper were read out, amid much laughter, the company were informed that "Miss Annie Dimpleton and Mr. Mowerton met in a mud-puddle," and then followed the usual incongruous consequences.

The parties thus coupled together looked so remarkably conscious and confused, that every one wondered what there was in this nonsense to embarrass them so—every one but Rebecca Knorr, she alone knew of the *real* meeting in a mud-puddle.

When winter approached, Annie received a warm invitation from her city relative to return to the cosy nest she had left.

"It is scandalous," urged the writer, "after the trouble I have had with you, these ten years, to settle quietly down in the country to become an old maid, or the wife of some humdrum clergyman or farmer. I intended to cultivate a Mr. Mowerton for you—a splendid man, with a nice fortune. He lives somewhere in the country, but I heard that he spent his winters in the city, and I think I could have managed it. To be sure, he has a cork-leg, but that is a trifle compared——"

At this interesting juncture, Annie's laughter was suddenly cut short by a summons to her father's study. When the Rector had a solemn reproof to administer, or an offer to communicate, he always held audience in his study; and it was difficult to determine beforehand which of the two was in store.

Annie was not left long in doubt, however; and what the father and daughter said, on this occasion, is of no material importance. Dr. Dimpleton had known Herbert Mowerton from a boy—his character was unblemished—and if Annie chose to overlook his nearly two score years, and his infirmity, (meaning *me*, I suppose!) why, one of his six daughters would be comfortably provided for.

Annie's reply must have been satisfactory; for, before long, there was a new housekeeper where one had been for some time needed, and she was as unlike old Mrs. Rinkle as May is unlike December.

Annie's rich relative observed, at the wedding, that, "after all, chance was everything—and for all that she saw to the contrary, Annie

might as well have been left to vegetate at the rectory those ten years." But *my* opinion is, that, in that case, she would not have been half so interesting, and that Herbert Mowerton would not have thought so either.

Rebecca Knorr spent the anniversary of the wedding with them; and Mr. Mowerton began to express his gratitude to the sensible spinster for her good advice, to which he attributed his present happiness; then he blessed his escape from Bertha Carleton—he had told Annie that story; then he became intensely grateful to his horse for getting lame; but Rebecca, who, as I said before, was practical, roused him to a sense of *my* neglected merits by exclaiming,

"I think, that, after all, that new cork-leg had a great deal to do with it!"

THE BURNHAMS OF BOSCAWEN PLAIN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SUSY L.—'S DIARY."

[Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1860, by Charles J. Peterson, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, in and for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.]

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 136.

CHAPTER XIV.

June 21st, Morning.

I do not hear many words from Roosevelt or my father directly, touching "this affair of Horace's," as my mother always calls it. But she talks with them, and afterward tells me what they say. Roosevelt says he don't know what is to be done, he is sure. There she is—Clara, he means—there the child is. If she were to die there, as she believes she is going to do, then the child will be alone, with nobody to take any interest in her, or do anything for her, except one old gentleman, Judge Haven, to whom she has assigned the child's guardianship, and who can't be expected to do much beside seeing to the property and keeping her at school. "This is about all he has to say," my mother adds. "Only, he wonders you don't despise him; but he says you do right not to; he says he never meant, never dreamed of the evil and suffering that have come. He says there are men and women too, who would think he ought to be torn in pieces, if they knew about it; men, he says, who have been cheating, lying, ruining the fortunes of good, honest men; who, in this way, have brought the honest men they have ruined to discouragement, to drunkenness and rags, even to suicide; women, he says, who have destroyed the honor and peace of other women, by their wretched slander; and still, he says, these men and women are ready to burst with horror, and hunt a man to the earth, if they find out that he has been doing, not a greater wrong, but a wrong by another and unapproved pattern. He walks the floor saying these things, and is so strung up! Poor, poor boy! Your father," lowering her voice a little, speaking with less certainty, "I don't know exactly how he feels about it; but he seems to dread its getting out, its being known here. He says we had better be careful that Mrs. Eaton don't get hold of it. He says if Horace writes many letters, he had better not mail them here, but had better ride to Fisherville with them. He thinks he had better not write many. He had better get it out of his mind; we had all of us better get it out of our minds—our party coming off in two days,

now; we shall have no interest nor spirit for our friends, he says, if we keep this affair in our heads all the while; and he says he wants it to go off *well*; says he is particular about it, and has reason to be. He says he has some reason to believe that Mr. Walker will work for the nomination your father's friends propose for him; and that a few of Mr. Walker's personal friends will work for him. Your father says he don't mean to *try* for the office; but he wants things to go off well; don't want to do anything, nor neglect anything that shall disappoint his friends and well-wishers, in the party. The party in politics, I mean. So he wants us to do our best; wants our party to be the best that has ever been given, or is likely to be given, here at Boscawen Plain, by Mrs. Walker, or any other woman. So, let's go now; let's shake this off entirely and go to work. Mrs. Eaton has beautiful luck with things! I never saw anything like it! never anything overdone, never anything underdone! Have you seen her fruit cake since she got the frosting and ornaments on? no?—then come."

I stayed after my mother went, to put the rims on Mrs. Eaton's tarts. My father came in to fasten his whip-lash. Mrs. Eaton left the room while he stood there in silence, winding a cord about the lash; and then, stepping up near the table where I was working—and every footfall smote upon my faint nerves—he said, "You've nothing to do with this affair of Roosevelt's. It don't concern you at all. I've noticed a change in you since you heard of it, a change that it don't belong to you to show; and I shall expect to see no more of it. I shall expect you to be interested in helping Mrs. Eaton; in doing whatever you can to make the party that is coming—*soon* now—an agreeable and satisfactory one, to every person that comes. I shan't expect one person who is present to be passed over, nor neglected. She, your mother, will do her part; I'm not concerned about this," drawing himself up, "but she don't know them all. You do; and you must act accordingly. As I said before, you've nothing to do with this affair of Roosevelt's. That connection is broken off.

More men than *you're* any idea of have such connections. So you've nothing to do with it but keep it still, and do and appear exactly as you would if no such affair had come to your knowledge; exactly!"

Evening.

When I came away from aunt Rosalia's this evening, Alice came out with me, as she often does, her arm in mine, her pretty little head filled with one thing and another; which, be it what it may, she brings forth and shows to me. If it is something gay, she laughs constantly, looking constantly in my face. If it is something "hateful," as she says, she looks in my face, looks up at the stars, down at her feet, and pouts and scolds, perhaps cries. If it is dubious, she drops her head; raising it a little, at times, to inquire of me, then drops it again, her eyes on her slow feet. This she did to-night. She wanted to ask me, she said. Mrs. Eaton thought that something wrong was going on with Mr.—with that Mr. Rosenvelt of mine, from some things she heard my father say to me, yesterday, and from the looks and appearance of us all. What was it? hugging my arm up closer, she asked. Was it anything I was at liberty to tell?

No, it was not anything I was at liberty to tell.

Too bad! Mrs. Eaton told her and her mother what my father said in her hearing, and they couldn't help making something *awful* bad out of it!

I was not at liberty to say anything about it, I again said, when she waited.

Too bad! she wanted to know, awfully! Was it anything really bad, about him? about Mr. Rosenvelt? anything that made me blame him, or like him less?

I had never liked Mr. Rosenvelt so well, as I had the last three days, I told her.

Queer! what could it mean then? giving my arm another quick hug. Couldn't I give her one little hint?

No; there was no reason why I should.

Only! *she* wanted to know so! Too bad! but—good-by and good night. She was coming to the party! It was quite time for her to be making the acquaintance of this Rosenvelt of mine!

Morning, the 22nd.

I say to her, to my mother and to myself, that I never liked him so much, felt so warm a friendliness toward him, as I do now. But he will never be my husband. I say this oftener and oftener to myself, each time with greater certainty, each time with deeper pain in my heart. I do not see this in the past; the past, sad and

filled with error as it is, might be but the stepping-stones, up which, hand in hand, eye on eye, we would climb to a region of such purification and deep joy, as we would never have known without it. I see it in the present and the future. I see that with her so near, dying, the poor young child so near, suffering, torn with such loss, torn, suffering year after year, year after year, with the drear loneliness and pain of memory, his life and mine too, if joined with his, would be a stupendous lie, a mocking, blinding, bewildering, hardening lie. If we strove, by this undertaking and device, by that undertaking and device, to so attach happiness to us, that she would stay and be with us morning, noon and night, and in the deep silence of the night, she would not be so enticed. We would be compelled to know that she will not come where truth is not. We would then put forth semblances of content, smiles that would be false, unconcerned words that would be false; not that we would in our souls mean to be false; we would, perhaps, all this time hate lies, long for truth, pray and weep for it; but then, after all, would be the great lie which our miserable pride, our miserable vanity would not let us pluck out, cast from us, leaving the place for truth, blessed, divine truth, to come and fill it, diffusing thence her serenity and light. Rosenvelt's pride would not let us; my mother's would not; my father's would not; for them what obloquy and scorn would come to us! then how would the envious and the malicious triumph! So they would say, with looks full of horror. But would they triumph? Would we be scorned and despised? I do not believe it. If I were to marry him to-morrow, and next day were to say to Mrs. Lane, (the most narrow-minded and ill-natured, perhaps, of all our acquaintances,) if I were to sit down close by her, look with sincere, and so with troubled eyes in her face, and say, "Mrs. Lane, my husband has a great sorrow in his path, just now, the consequence of a great sin of which he, some time since, repented, from which he, some time since, turned away; I want to tell you all about it, and then you see if you don't pity him out of the very bottom of your heart." Listening, her tears of pity would come, would fall. Out of the bottom of her heart she would commiserate him and me. She would carry the story, washed of its noxiousness by her tears, vivified with mercy by her love, through all the place; and all the place, hearing her account, and seeing with what chastened composure we came forth among them, seeing the beautiful halo and inspiration of truth and love about our heads, as we came, as we spoke,

as we acted, would do us the homage of all the truth and goodness in them.

I shall try them. If they will listen, then I know what I will do. I will go and will myself close the eyes of the poor creature. Then I will take her child close to my heart and bring her away, to be, from that hour to the end of our days, my beloved, my precious child. Mrs. Lane, and all my friends and acquaintances, shall know where I go, on what a sad and sacred errand. When I return, leading my child up to them, I will say, "See, here is my blessed little girl; you must all help me to make up for her great, great loss;" and there isn't one heart of all the so-called censorious, narrow hearts, here at Boscawen Plain, that would not then show us how goodness had all along lain there beneath the evil, waiting for trust and truth like mine to draw it forth. But if they will not listen, if Roosevelt waves slowly his negative, with his melancholy head; and my mother, looking at his sign, says, "No—no; I think as Horace does, that that would never do;" if my father, stiff and stern with disapprobation, says, "There is nothing more to be said, or done, or thought, about this! It can never be! It would ruin us with our friends; and I have particular reasons, at this time, for wishing to stand well with my friends, and for wishing every member of my family to stand well;" if this comes, as I believe it will, then I know what I must do. I know it with the greater certainty of its being the right thing for me, because I have talked with uncle Julius about it, and he thinks exactly as I do.

CHAPTER XV.

The 24th.

As I stood near the folding doors, last evening, talking with uncle Julius and Gen. Hastings, I became gradually conscious of light, merry, but hearty laughter, going on, just within the back parlor, peal upon peal. We all listened to it, at length; all laughed hearing how the little peals came, and how mirthful they were. We heard that Alice's laugh was merriest, most incessant; heard how she only broke off a moment now and then to say, "Oh! now, Mr. Roosevelt, if that isn't what I call a queer guess!" or "Lizzy Walker, just hear! Mr. Roosevelt guesses it's a monkey! as if a monkey could

'Put in a panic old sturdy John Bull,'

and so on! Mr. Roosevelt, try once more—the rest have all guessed it, you see. If you can't guess it, trying once more, I'll tell you what it is."

He was farther back; he spoke low; we did

not hear what he guessed, but it was something that made Alice dance. Her gauzy, light figure made a part of its graceful *pirouette* out where we could see it. "Oh!" she said, having come to a halt, "that was farther from it than all the rest put together. Now I will tell you; now you just listen. You know there was once, in France, a little man with large ambitions, and that his name was——"

"Napoleon First," he answered, laughing.

"Oh! but you laugh now in such a way, I don't believe but you knew all along; only you wanted to keep me explaining in that way, for the fun you could get out of it. Lizzy, give him that best charade of yours; that is, if—do you like guessing charades?"

"Yes, I do," he answered, with the laughing voice I've heard so many times, but not once before since the bad news came. Uncle Julius' face grew serious, just then, just as my heart was growing serious with thoughts of what might at that very moment be passing in a chamber where a woman lay sick unto death, and a little child watched her. That chamber, its mournful occupants, took hold of me as the one great reality that concerned me, claimed me; and the scene about me became, as it were, but a vale of shadows; the laughter, the buzzing of the many-toned voices, the gay dresses, the bright light flooding all, were but a hollow mockery of the life that is earnest, that is real, that is deeply and truly life, and not death.

"What is it?" asked uncle Julius, who, now that the general had moved on, turned himself wholly to me, with his good inquiring eyes on mine.

"It makes me sad," I answered, "comparing this scene with another, at——"

"At Northampton. Yes, I know; I can understand."

"I know now, I shall always know after this," I said, "why it is that the aged who have looked on sorrow so many times, say unto us, as they see our preparations for a gathering like this, 'I don't see what you find there for my part.'"

"Still, God is here," said uncle Julius, speaking thoughtfully, cheerfully, his beautiful eyes going over the groups and pairs. "God is nowhere in the world, neither in the pulpit nor the cloister, if He is not here where so many of His children are."

Yes, I told him, that was true; that was a beautiful, an inspiring truth; but it needed a strong, calm, collected soul like his, I added, to find God there, as one finds Him in the church, in solitude; to feel Him, to feel and know that one's hand lay in His, that one's spirit mingled

with His and was blest with the high communion.

"One must pray," said he, "one must pray here as devoutly, as trustingly, as one prays in one's closet; and then one finds God."

And then my heart went out to Him in a little, short, tearful prayer; and He came; and the place, and the faces, and the sounds of the voices, were all changed. I loved every being there unspeakably; and, as I attended afterward to one and another, speaking to one, another and another, the words that were suited to them, it seemed to me that I had the power to take every one of that large company along a little way with me toward heaven.

"Anna!" said Alice, huddling up close to me in the dressing-room, where I was helping them to find their things, and taking my leave of them. Alice had been a long time finding hers, a long time putting them on; there were now only two or three others left, and they were in another part of the room. "Anna!" giving one of her pleased, flashing glances at her figure in the large mirror before which we stood, "I've had a good time! I'm glad I came! You!" speaking low, putting her head nearer mine, fluttering with her bonnet-strings and her light shawl, "I never saw such an agreeable man as this Mr. Roosevelt of yours is! Ha! we had the nicest time; he, Lizzy Walker, Hetty Lane, Sarah McIntosh, and I! We had charades and riddles there, you see, in one corner of the back parlor; and he was so amusing! He likes charades as well as I do, I imagine; and I like them better, I believe, than any other amusement in the world. They suit me, somehow; and he appeared as if they did him. You'll have a grand husband."

She did not know that she ended with a sigh, with a shade of regret crossing her beautiful, fresh features; but she did. I kissed her. I said I would go down with her and see to his going home with her. She shrank a little, laid a little fluttering hand on my arm, and said, "I hate to trouble him! I wanted Robin to come, terribly; but his head ached so! It wasn't a common headache; he told me to tell you so; if it had been, he would have come; but it was one of his hard, trip-hammer headaches, as he calls 'em; and he could hardly hold his head up, or see out of his eyes."

We were, by this time, at the foot of the stairs; I was looking into the rooms, each side, for Roosevelt. I found him in the back parlor alone. (My father and mother and the Concord friends were still standing near the door of the hall, taking leave of uncle Julius and aunt

Mary.) He stood still as a marble man, between the parted curtains, looking out on the night.

"Here you are," said I. "I've been looking after you."

"Yes, here I am," turning round a face whose forehead was very white. "Come here and let me touch you; if I may," taking my hand in his; "if you can bear to have me."

I did not speak; but I felt very friendly toward him, with my eyes on his; and I suppose he saw it; for he shut my hand close between both his, touched his lips to my forehead; and, with a look of pain mingling with his look of pleasure, said, "Just touching you, just seeing you, any time, does me good. I thought to-night, when I saw you going round with so much of heaven in your face, that the man who does get you for his companion in life, is made. I thought that I wasn't worthy and never can be, after what I've gone through." Again he kissed my forehead, this time with lingering lips, as if it were a parting; again pressed my hand between both his, and with swelled veins and a look of great pain on his features, was turning to leave me, when I detained him, laying my hand on his shoulder and saying, "Alice is here, dear Roosevelt, in the hall, at the door. She has no one to go home with her. I came on purpose to find you."

Yes, he would go. Making visible efforts to shake off his abstraction, he attended me out to the hall; said, as we came in sight of Alice, "I'm at your service, Miss Bishop, in one moment; as soon as I find my—*chapeau*. Here 'tis; blessed Anna has found it; she finds everything. I shan't say good night now, Anna. Let me see your light dress here waiting for me when I come back." He was offering his arm to Alice, looking back to me.

"No," I said; "for how late it is! only think! So good night now; good night, cousin Alice."

"Good night, then," bowing over his shoulder as they went down the steps; putting what complaint he felt into the tones; it was not great, though. I fancy Alice's arm lying lightly on his, made it less. I fancy that if the time comes when we part for aye, as betrothed husband and wife, I mean, her arm lying on his, her soft form beside him, her beautiful face turned to his, will make that also less. God, let it be so, if that will be really happiest, best for him.

CHAPTER XVI.

July 26th.

We rode up to Franklin this afternoon, to show my mother and Roosevelt the rocky, out-

August 1st.

of-the-way place where Webster was born, and the beautiful, green Elms Farm, to which his family removed when he was two years old, to which he came oftener and oftener, as the burdens of his life grew heavy and its disappointments thickened before him. We got out at the former place. My mother picked out of the turf leaves that had prematurely faded and fallen from the elm planted nearly a hundred years ago by Webster's father. She wanted to send them away to some friends who would value them for Webster's sake. I stood still on the turf feeling it thrill all my body, thinking of the little, bare feet that used to toddle about them, and of the large, soft, baby eyes that used to look the landscape over. My father talked with John Taylor about his crops; Rosenvelt watched the animals and fowl about the door and in the orchard; called me to see the self-consequence of a hen walking about with her solitary charge, a gosling half as large as herself. He loves animals, sees all their little characteristic movements, attitudes, understands all their noises, all the tips of their heads, all the looks out of their round, vigilant eyes. He accosts them, answers them, laughs heartily, sympathizingly at their cunning ways. Bless him! So I say many a time every day, when I see how good and full of loving simplicity his heart is toward every creature.

"Here we are," said he, on our return, as we rode slowly into the shade of our own elms. He sighed, and sad looks of yearning were in the eyes he raised to the far-sweeping branches. "Here we are, my Anna. Let me say 'my Anna,' now and then, if I do cheat myself in saying it. Here we are; but I wish we could ride on just so, you and I, till our time on this earth is fairly over. You don't know how I wish it! You can't think how I long for it!"

My father was helping my mother out from the front seat, guarding with solicitude her beautiful skirts. Rosenvelt, when his turn came to help me out, took me out in his arms and so set me down on the door-step. My father, my mother, Mrs. Eaton, who came to tell us we had company waiting in the parlor, all laughing, called it "a good one!" "That was handsomely done!" they said. But Rosenvelt himself was tremendously agitated. He was pale; he seemed as if he were faint. When I went into the hall to leave my bonnet and shawl, he came, caught me into his arms, held me one moment strained to his heart, kissing me upon forehead, cheek, and lips; then, letting his arms fall, he turned slowly up the stairs, not once looking back, holding upon the balustrade at every step.

Vol. XXXVII.—14

Poor, poor Robin! now the embrowned, work-hardened hands must be shut upon their daily toils, or tossed in fever. Now the new ponderous volumes of hard technicalities must lie in piles upon the table, must be there until the dust of many—we know not, alas! how many days—gathers among them. It comes of his over-tasking himself, of the work that each day began so early, each night ended so late.

He does not know us, not one of us, how wistfully soever the glassy eyes may look us over. But he calls for us reproachfully, mournfully, like a little child longing for its mother: "Where's mother?" or "Where's Alice?" or "I wonder *where* Anna is, that she *never* comes! What keeps mother away from here so long? She used to be here; I used to see her round!" he says, even while his mother, Alice, and I are beside him, bending over him, longing, striving to cool and settle the sick, burning brain. "Tell *him* to come!" he says, meaning Rosenvelt, who is with him a great deal by night and day, and is as assiduous nursing him, as tender and skillful as if he were a woman.

We do not know how it will end. God only knows whether he will ever come out of the sickness that is so terrible. We said to-day that we would have few hopes, only, it seems to us, because the affliction is so great, that God will not let it come. Alice and I say this. Aunt Rosalia does not; for she has seen death come and supplant a life even more precious to her than this of her precious, her good and only boy.

Rosenvelt is a comfort to her; she said so to-day, when she saw how his touch comforted Robin; how Robin's eyes, when they began in one of his lucid hours to-day to search the room for him, gladdened at the sight of him. Alice, seeing what a stay he is to her mother and to Robin, feeling the rooms grow light when he comes and desolate when he goes, says she is sure there is nobody in the whole world, who, to her, seems so great and good as he.

CHAPTER XVIII.

August 7th.

He is dead. With all his precious youth and beauty on him, there he lies, placid as marble, in his shroud—the poor, faithful hands callous even yet with their labors, folded at rest upon the still heart. There came at last a day of transcendent clearness, when his hand no longer sought other hands, when his eyes no longer

looked for one form, or another form, when his dry lips no longer said, mournfully, "Where's mother?" or "Where's Alice?" or "Where's Anna?" but when he clasped his hands upon his breast, raised his eyes upward and said in tones that melted all who heard him, "Where's the Saviour?" There came a morning (his last on earth) when he found Him; when with the "joy unspeakable" in his eyes, his voice, and all about him, as a light of heaven, he said again and again, "I've found Him! I've found my blessed Saviour! He's right here!"

Aunt Rosalia feels the glory of his innocent, dutiful life, of his triumphant death; feels what it is to be the mother of one who has gone before, to be with God, and is lifted above sorrow; but Alice wrings her hands and cries, sometimes aloud. I, "Oh! God!" I say, "that he is gone!"

Monday, the 11th.

He is buried, the blessed, darling boy! his flesh is buried out of our sight, away from this earth forever! Aunt Rosalia sinks sometimes and weeps; but, most of the time, she goes about with the same mild serenity. Alice cries at everything that brings him to her mind. And we cannot turn our eyes, that some work he has done, or alas! alas! left undone, does not meet them, to draw the tears, to make the temples throb, and the heart ache. For his rich life was of his own will poured out, or of its own spontaneous energy beamed forth upon all the action, all the life about him. So it was spent early. "Midway between morn and noon," literally

"With the sickle in his hand,
He bowed amid the sheaves his manly head,
And left the toil unto a mournful band;"

but left it, thanks be to God! to be

"Numbered in yon resting land,
With the blessed dead!"

At this hour, on this blue, still morning, through aunt Rosalia's windows, other forms can be seen moving about in the field, finishing the wheat harvest begun with his own dear hands. I, sitting here, would give all the world out of my hands, if it were mine, to call him back, to have him here once more, with the kindling, tender, earnest, beautiful life.

God knows what He does; at this one thought, this only, the tension upon the heart-strings gives way, and rest, and balm come.

Uncle Julius, at the funeral yesterday, began his remarks with the cross that is so heavy, and ended with the crown that fadeth not away; showed us how *all* our sorrows, all the darkness on earth, are but the shadows of the cross planted by divine, unseen hands here in our midst, the cross symbolized eighteen hundred

years ago, when our blessed Lord bore his upon his own shoulders up Calvary; how all the blessedness, all the light are from the crown He left shining over our heads, ready for us when He went upward.

Later.

When Roosevelt was speaking to me last evening of Robin's death, he said, "The worst of it with me is, that I might have saved him. From the time you told me how hard his life was, I fully meant, some way, to put money into his hands, so that he should go on comfortably after this. I just as much thought I was going to do it, as I believed that I lived. But, while I idled—now and then thinking how I would manage to get the money into his hands without hurting his delicacy—he was straining his life so hard that it gave way; and now there he is in the grave, and I am here." I never heard so sad a voice; I never saw eyes so expressive of mournful self-reproach. He rose to walk the floor a few moments, as is his way, when either grief or gladness get hold of him, and then came back to me, saying, "'Tis the way I live, the way I've always been living. I've always been neglecting something that I ought to do, or doing something that I had better not do; or, at least, my life has been mostly filled with one or the other of these classes of action. I don't know, I'm sure, what I'm here for."

"Probably to come at length where you will do right all the time, through the pain you feel for the wrong you do, and for your neglect of the right," I answered, with cheerfulness.

"Oh! I don't know about that! The truth is, I lack one grand quality that I see in you, that I saw in him that's gone. I suppose it is earnestness. I don't know what else it can be. I haven't a particle of it. If I can have comfortable quarters, can see none but comfortable people round me, if Pedro shines, and I can see Leon somewhere round, and nothing disturbs my sleep, or my appetite—this is about all I care for. Once in a while, when I see what some one suffers, I want to relieve them, to be sure—as I wanted to help poor Robin, as I wanted to get you out of your kitchen work, and so on; but perhaps 'tis more because it makes me uncomfortable seeing others so, than anything else, that brings me to it, after all; perhaps this too is selfishness like all the rest."

"You wrong yourself, in part," I said. "The heart that aches at sight of suffering, and gets its own relief in relieving others, is a good, benevolent heart that I will defend, let its owner say what he will."

"Yes; that's because you are a precious girl. You haven't the least idea, yourself, how good, and beautiful, and noble you are."

I would have laughed at him and at myself; but, sitting on a stool before me, holding my fingers tightly, he kept his gravity nearly unabated; and soon, I was listening with gravity, while he said, "You are as cheerful as a spring morning; you're more like a spring morning than anything else. For, if you listen, you'll hear minor notes even in a spring morning. You see all the fun there is, just as clearly as you see the suffering; are just as ready to laugh as you are to—weep, I was going to say; but I suppose you laugh a hundred times to shedding one tear; don't you?"

"Oh! yes, indeed!—but then my heart is sad often, in the very midst of my laughter; for things do not go right in this world. We are, none of us, so excellent and happy as we ought to be. If we were, all of us, a great deal better, more like Christ, then wouldn't the laughter come? and the music! just think how our songs would be poured out everywhere! in the kitchen, on the stairs, going out and coming in! just think!"

"Yes, I know! I can think something about how it would be."

"Yes, indeed, you can! We would dance for a divine joy; and so, even our dancing would grow divine!"

"Yes, I can see," musingly, with yearning eyes. "I don't suppose we know at all how to live, yet; we Americans, especially. The poor, ragged Italians sing and dance——"

"Yes; without a grain of wisdom though, mingling with their lightness of heart. We have gone beyond them, since we are seeking, striving. We have closed our lips upon the song, and withdrawn our feet from the dance, because the painful search absorbs us. By-and-by, when we shall have found wisdom, art, high refinement, beauty, all that the soul, the æsthetic soul, longs for, when we have brought them and joined them with our love, our inborn gayety, just think how it will be then!"

"Yes! I can think that you will be as a queen, when those days come, (if they ever do while we live,) for such days as those would give you a chance. Let me tell you what you must wear in those days, Anna—black velvet, with the finest lace and pearls. Pearls or diamonds; which do you think?"

Respecting his picture of those days, the serious fidelity with which he had given me place therein, I let the figure of black velvet and fine lace be, myself admiring it, myself

laying pearls upon the brow, the arms, and the bosom; whereupon he thanked me with enthusiasm and kept kissing my fingers. My mother coming in, he told her about it, and said, "Isn't that grand, Molly?" adding, his eyes once more clouded with yearning, or, it might be, with memory, "if any such days ever come to us."

CHAPTER XIX.

August 25th.

I SUPPOSE I am ill. They say I am and have been ever since Robin died; that I was, in fact, before he died, if I had known it. They say it comes of so much bending, of working upon him so much with my hands and will, giving all my electricity out of myself, taking his fever in its stead. And I suppose it does; for my spine, never one of the strongest, most enduring, suffers constant uneasiness, almost constant pain; and my strength is gone. I can lift a hand, upon trying; but, any time, I would a great deal rather not try. I write this—feeling weakness at every stroke—with my pencil.

September 2nd.

I do not lie in bed, as they want me to. I sit in an easy-chair, big enough for myself and the regiment of pillows and cushions they want to keep about me. The doctor comes every day, feels my pulse, looks into my eyes, tells me I'll soon do well, and leaves his potions. Uncle Julius comes in every morning, calls me lazy; says I am a dear, patient girl though, and that, when he can see me down stairs, on my feet again, he will know how to prize it. My mother, God bless her! is as faithful as an own mother could be. Mrs. Eaton tries to do something for me, piles my pillows up; and when she sees how they topple down the moment her hand is off, she seems ashamed and says, "I ain't worth a cent at anything but just cooking. I've been thinking; and, when they'll let you put something besides doctor's stuff into your mouth, you shall have something! you see if you don't! If you don't, my name ain't Eaton, and never was!"

My father sends up word by her and by my mother, that he is glad to hear that I feel myself so comfortable; that, if there is anything I want, in town, or out of town, I shall have it; and that he shall come up as soon as I am a little stronger, to see how I get along.

Rosenvelt sits at my feet, holds my fingers, working upon them, looks up into my face, says I grow more beautiful every day; that somehow my beauty, as it changes, awes him. He lets Leon come with him; says "the chap" won't be

cheated out of it; that he sleeps with an eye open, watching him; that he understands him as well as the rest do, when he says he is going up to Anna's room, or up to see Anna; gets up, has on his gravest look, and comes up at his side. He used to wag his tail and go out of himself almost, twisting himself round, when he saw me coming, or came where I was; now he comes, his nose tipped down, his grave, doubting eyes looking up through his brows at me and at his master, by turns. Roosevelt laughs to see how modest his approach is, and says he is awe-struck, like his master. He is not willing to go when his time is up; and to-day Roosevelt left him. Then he wagged his tail, when he looked up to me, after having seen the last of the retreating shoulders of his master.

Thursday, the 4th.

I do not see Roosevelt at all, yesterday and to-day. This is the reason. When my mother came to my room in the afternoon, yesterday, which she did not do until long past her usual hour, she looked so agitated, so flushed, that I knew some bad news had come. It made me very weak, made me tremble, thinking what might have happened at Northampton. I could not bear the suspense; and, when I found that my mother kept talking about my pillows, about what my father said at dinner, without exactly knowing what she was saying, I stopped her with asking her if there was any news yet from Northampton.

"Oh, yes!" and then she sunk down in a chair beside me, and gave up her attempts at concealment. "She's dead; the poor creature's dead; and the news of it has broken Horace right down. I never saw anybody tremble so! He says——"

"But please, mother," I was obliged to interpose, "please don't tell me any more now."

That she was dead, if her life had been calm, domestic, that of wife as well as mother, would not have shaken me; but all the wrongs she had met, and herself, poor, wronged creature! perpetrated, upon her child and upon her own soul; all the agonizing conflict, and shame, the bitter remorse and sorrow she must have felt looking upon her poor child, and death that was to part them so near; the terror and distress of the child, who, amidst all the faces and forms that will be about her in this time of trial, can see no face, no form that she loves—all came upon me, an overwhelming weight, and stifled me. I was faint; I breathed with difficulty. My mother, alarmed, reproaching herself for

her forgetfulness of my feelings in her distress for her brother's, loosened my dress, bathed me, kissed me with her tears dropping when she saw that my color came back, that my breath was easier, and said, "Now, you are better! How much trouble can come, how long it can keep coming, from just one wrong thing!" she added, as she continued to bathe my head and face, and put my hair in order. "When Horace had got everything arranged, as he thought, had got them settled at Limonar, he would look as pleased as a child and say, 'Now it's all over with.' We don't know in this world when a thing is over with, do we?"

The 5th.

No, I said, still very weak. But I supposed, I told her, that we can know when our suffering on account of a wrong we have committed is over, and has a right and reason to be; I supposed that this will be when the suffering has done its legitimate work in us; has helped us to put our pride, our fear of the world rather than of God, our prejudice, all our sin aside, planting our feet in the right, gathering the right about us, as panoply and bulwark, as our all, in God. In this case, I said, this under which we were now suffering, I supposed that if we could, all at once, bring ourselves to do just what we ought to do, we would have peace.

Just what we ought to do? and what did I think that was? she asked.

It was to tell the truth, I said, before all the world; to take the child as our own, and by our own truth and our great love for her, help her to know, speak, and bear the truth without shame; as she ought indeed, poor thing! since not one jot or tittle of shame belongs to her.

The 6th.

Oh! my mother said, that would never do! what would people say? it would set all Boscawen to talking!

And if it did, I said, that was no matter. And I really felt that it was not, God was so great to me, all this world so small! Besides, I knew that the Boscawen people would not wish to destroy us. I believed that, when they had had time to look our conduct and us all over, they would settle down into loving and approving us more heartily than ever. So I told my mother; but, with the color every moment deepening on her cheeks, with the uneasy light every moment brightening in her eyes, she shook her head, replying that she could not think so; for her part, it looked terrible to her having it known; she was sure my father would never consent to its being known; especially now, when he was talked of for office! nor

would Horace have courage to face it. Oh! she knew it could never be done!

"Perhaps not," sighed I, "but I am sorry."

Later.

Seeing me try to adjust my pillows, she rose and helped me, saying, "I haven't a doubt, Anna, that you have the right of it. I've no doubt it is what Christ, if he were here this moment, would bid us do; but I *can't*! I haven't courage! I wish I had; I know I ought to have, as a professed Christian; but I *can't*. And, if I could, I know your father wouldn't consent; nor would Horace. So—is this right, poor child? So we won't think of it. She's gone; the child is well provided for, and has a good guardian; one of the best men in Northampton, *she* wrote. She didn't expect Horace to own the child—of course she didn't! how could she? There, now you must rest. You must let this go out of your mind."

Would she talk with her brother and my father about it? I urged, with a pertinacity that made her smile.

"Yes, I will; but I know what they will say. Now you must settle down and rest. There, that's a good girl! adieu."

"Adieu, mother."

CHAPTER XX.

September 8th.

My mother wore brighter looks when she came up this afternoon; and the reason of it was explained when she said, "I have talked with them about it. Or, I didn't say much to your father; I just told him you thought you and Horace ought to take the girl. He said it would never do! it wasn't to be thought of! I gave Horace your whole idea; but he said he could never stand that! He said he deserved all the blame and shame that can come; but he couldn't stand it! So all we have to do is to get over it. This we shall do in time. You know what a shock her first letter gave us; but we were getting over it nicely; we were nearly over it, when this came. Time does wonders; all we need, now that she is gone, is time; there can be nothing more to come after this. It must be that it is all over now. It seemed to relieve Horace to hear that you know all and are so calm about it. But he says her death cuts him all up. Those were his words; and he curled down into a heap in his arm-chair, when he said it, and looked as though everything was over with him. But I know him. He sinks easily, rises easily. He'll never feel all the time, as he would if she had never lived and—

died, I suppose; but he'll soon be over it, so that he will laugh and joke and be as lively as ever. So I don't feel so bad. I can wait."

Morning.

So, instead of opening our lives, clearing them, spreading them out a bright web of truth, we are to roll and pack them closer than ever, that the patches be not distinctly seen, and the seams that hold the lies and the truth together. I can think what I shall do when I am a little, a very little stronger. I have known, since uncle Julius, when he came up to see me, two days ago, said, "You need the water-treatment, Anna, that is what you need. Sitting here in the midst of your pillows and taking medicines will never bring you out of it, sound of nerve. You ought to live half of the time in the water and half in the air; then I should have hope of you. I'm going to tell your father so." There is a pleasant, shady water-cure a dozen miles or so from here, up the railroad and river, at Hill. I would go there any other time; this time I shall go to the Florence water-cure, Northampton. My heart gives a bound of joy at the thought.

CHAPTER XXI.

Wednesday, the 10th.

It is all settled; I am to go to Northampton. All, the doctor and all, thought uncle Julius' idea an excellent one; but my father thought I had better go to Hill; he was averse to my meeting, or seeing the girl, under any circumstances. No good could come of it; we had got to be very careful, or it would leak out some way; in his mind, I had better go to Hill. My mother thought so too, unless I would be *very* careful! but I would. Yes, I would. I would promise them that nothing should come to light through my going there. I would see the girl; would perhaps speak some kind words to her, if I saw that she needed them; would see just how she was situated, just what her guardian proposed doing with her, and we would all feel better than we would in ignorance.

That was true. My mother could see that; so could Rosenvelt. It seemed to both my mother and Rosenvelt that it was precisely the right thing for me to do, to go to Northampton; and my father consented.

Later.

I shall not wait long. I would go to-morrow if left to follow my own course; but the doctor says I must put off the going until I have such strength that the bare thought of going does not excite me as he sees it do at present. So I

shall be very calm. When they told uncle Julius what the doctor said, looking me with great kindness in the face, he answered, "Once get her into the air and on the way, and I'll answer for the excitement." He always understands me, and knows what I need better than anybody else does.

The 11th.

My mother says I must have two elegant wrappers, one for mornings, one for afternoons. Northampton isn't Boscawen Plain, she says. It is a stylish place; that is, in comparison; and, besides, the fall is close by. I must have something warmer. Upon the fine cashmeres, and thibets, and all-wool delaines, therefore, and upon their colors, she holds anxious dissertations; finishes each dissertation with something like this, "I see! there is no other way. Horace or I must go to Concord to-morrow morning, carry your pattern; and, if Horace goes, he must give Mrs. Holmes money and tell her to do as she pleases. I want you to be very elegant, very; you can't, in my estimation, be too well dressed!" Then she goes. She returned soon after going, this evening, just as the sun was setting amidst peaceful clouds, and my heart was settling in gratitude to see them; returned to say, "I meant to tell you that it has done Horace a world of good, having your plans to talk about. I saw some of the old mischievous twinkle at the supper-table, when Mrs. Eaton, coming in with her hands full, ran over Leon and was so awkward and ashamed about it! She's prodigiously awkward, if anything makes her ashamed. Leon was as solemn as a Black Prince; you can't think how solemn he was."

"There I am, and here is Leon at the door," said Roosevelt, tapping lightly.

My mother told him he was the very man she wanted to see. Would he have the goodness to sit down and settle it which should go to Concord to-morrow?

Later.

Leon came with a thoughtful face that suited me, alack! better than did either of the human faces, just then. People must wear gowns; sick people must wear wrapping-gowns; they must, or had better, befit circumstances, as it appears to me they may be made to do through the exercise of quiet good taste and judgment, without enthusiasm or any great mental or physical absorption. So I thought, seeing my mother's enthusiasm. Besides, there were the peaceful clouds so near! why could not our life take a little of their magnificent coloring, a little of the softness and quiet, as if it were

of heaven, that lay upon them? why must they—our lives—forever be poorer than the clouds, when it belongs to them to be richer? So, with dim insight, I have been wondering, inquiring many a month; many a year. I suppose; I suppose the wonder, the inquiry, has been at the bottom of many a longing and discontent that has torn my heart, and I knew not why, or how. Now I know. Thank God that I know, although it has come, as I imagine this kind of wisdom often does, on the sable wings of death, of regrets, of yearnings that could find no satisfying bread or waters in our poor, ordinary life—poor, that is, as we render it; although, by all I have felt sitting here, thinking of dear Robin, of the life of Jesus, of the great and ever-near Father, the greatness of his word, of the capabilities of the human soul for joy and greatness in all its daily, hourly life, I know how rich and angelically bright God meant to be, now means to be, for the individual, for all the race, and, as soon as the purification of the race, the individual is ended. A grand Roman once claimed a certain high post, for this best of all reasons he had "lived up to it." As individuals, as a race, we deserve, and have, through eternally beneficent laws, the good we have lived up to; nothing more, nothing less. The martyr at the stake has it, the woman going about her daily household tasks, with heaven's light on her forehead, has it. 'Tis mightiest, not in the martyr, simply as being at the stake; not in the woman, simply as being in the midst of her cares; but it is mightiest in the mightiest soul.

Morning, the 12th.

"She won't forget the cords and tassels for each dress, of course," my mother was saying, as I withdrew my eyes from the now falling clouds; "but perhaps you had better make a minute of them." So he did, on his tablets, where he had already made others, of gloves and morning collars. Then my mother was satisfied and went. After she went, there was a silence which we, neither of us, knew exactly how to break easily; for we do not speak lately of that which is first in our minds, and so we get on but clumsily when we are together. If Leon is with us, we generally resort to him, as we this evening did. Roosevelt remarks upon his attachment to me; upon how he sees him get up, when they are down stairs together, hears him sigh—the knowing chap actually does sigh, he says—and then sees him turn off into the hall and up the stairs to my room. He knows, he says, as well as anybody, that his mistress is a better person than his master.

"Best old fellow!" he said, this evening, after some such remarks, and laying his hand on mine that rested on Leon's head. And as his hand lay there, closing more and more upon mine, there came to his poor face the look of pain and yearning, showing how his life is torn between memory and remorse; torn, moreover, although he probably hardly discerns this, between his true, benevolent propensities, and the worldly pride and fear that hold him back from obeying them.

"Let me kiss your hand," said he. "I hardly know when I shall feel worthy to kiss your pure forehead again. But I'd give more to be worthy than I would for heaven! a fact, Anna! No mortal can long for heaven, or anything, more than I do to wipe out so much of my past life as would leave me worthy to kiss you, on your forehead, on your cheek and lips, to do it, to stand before you, knowing that I am your equal in the sight of one who could see and know all." He spoke, as is his wont under high excitement, rapidly, with full veins and with light darting from his eyes. He added, "You don't know what it is to feel this. I am thankful that you never will. Poor Clara wasn't to blame; I want you to think of this when you are there where she died—where she is buried. I was the wretch who did it all; I was, because she loved me, and was alone and was helpless; because I was little less than a god in her sight. I was, socially, so far above her. It was as if I had set my feet on her and trampled her into the dust."

Later.

He was walking the floor, his voice choked with his tears, with the pity for her, the scorn of himself that sent them welling up. "But judge," he added, coming to stand in greater

quiet, beside me, "judge if it isn't too bad that I should wring and torture you in this manner. I am afraid you too will have reason to rue the day you met me—the bright, bright, blessed day that brought me here. For, let what will come, while I live, and when I die, as I have no doubt, I shall be glad that I came here where, for a while, my life ran along by the side of yours. You will never be sorry for this, Anna, promise me, let what will come to us?"

"No, never!"

"A thousand thanks! nobody is so kind as you. But I shan't, on this account, because you never say 'I am tired now, I must rest now,' stay and wear you out. I shall go early in the morning, with my own horse, so I shan't see you before I start; so good night," kissing my fingers.

"Good night, Rosenvelt——"

He is to accompany me. Or, my mother said he spoke of writing for one of the Florence nurses or attendants to meet me at Springfield, a few miles this side, and take me on. He dreads, she says, going any nearer where *she* died and is buried. He don't want to go near where the girl is; he is red in the face, he begins to walk back and forth at the thought of it.

The 15th.

Alice has been in to shed some last tears that Robin is dead, that I am going. I have shed some last tears for Robin, for my blessed mamma's grave, for the lovely, quiet landscape, the peaceful neighborhood, and the air of home; for the silent mysteries of the future toward which I go, with feet, hands, and nerves, at present, but feeble and doubtful.

We shall go to-morrow; now must I rest if I can.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THE RULING PASSION.

BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1860, by Mrs. Ann S. Stephens, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, for the Southern District of New York.]

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 63.

CHAPTER III.

THE family supper was over, and the Arnolds were gathered about the wide fireplace in the best room, listening to the animated conversation of their son, and forming plans of amusement for their guests during the brief term of days which was to comprise their visit.

Hannah sat in her own little nook, beside her father, half retiring behind the shelter of his arm, divided between joy at her brother's return, and timidity at the sight of strangers. With all a woman's tact, Laura de Montreuil drew her into conversation, and, before she was conscious of the kind object, the young girl was chatting quite gaily, though she gave a little start, and blushed every time Paul addressed her. For his foreign, deferential manner, so different from the honest bluntness of the young men who had occasionally visited at her father's house, seemed quite princely.

Both Mr. Arnold and his wife were persons of much more than ordinary talent, and in spite of the retired life, which they had led for so many years, possessed a range of thought and habits of refinement beyond those of the neighbors about them. Both de Montreuil and his sister were struck with the calm dignity of manner which characterized every act and remark. Hannah's loveliness, and quaint originality, atoned for any lack of worldly knowledge, and altogether young Arnold had no cause to fear that his family would not do him full justice in the eyes of the visitors who had accompanied him home.

The sleigh-ride was decided on for the next day, if the promise of snow held good, and altogether, after the first timidity wore off, Hannah decided that it was the pleasantest evening she had ever spent.

While the evening passed on so cheerfully in the parlor, supper was under way in Hagar's domain; and a friendly interest in the newcomer there, seemed to have proceeded even more rapidly than with the guests above stairs.

Peter was in his element, relating marvelous stories of city life, which quite took little Hagar's

breath away, and startled even Dan's self-sufficiency a little.

But to-morrow would be Thanksgiving, and the important duties which Hagar felt devolved upon her, soon aroused her from the pleasure of listening to the voluble Peter's ceaseless stories.

She rose briskly from the supper-table, from which it was Dan's habits never to stir so long as anything eatable remained upon it, and began bustling about, removing the dishes and putting things to right generally.

"Gettin' late," said she, in her brisk, little way. "You Dan, thar's all them chickens to kill and pick, to say nothing of the big gobbler and that ar' suckin' pig."

Dan looked at her, rose from the table, and seated himself by the fire, took from his pocket a short clay pipe, a plug of tobacco, and his clasp knife, and began gravely chipping up the fragrant weed, and rolling it over and over in his hand, preparatory to settling himself for a quiet smoke.

Now Hagar was the best of colored women, and revered Dan with all her soul, but the best housewives are not the most patient, and Dan's composure irritated little Hagar wonderfully.

"I say you," she exclaimed, "you'd better not wait till ole Missus comes out, afore you wring the necks of them ar' chickens."

"Hagar," said Dan, with a majestic wave of the hand that brandished the clasp knife imposingly, "never retrade domestic affairs upon company—that's a very 'portant rule that yer ort to follow."

"Miss Hagar has all the little whims of her charming sect," said Peter, determined not to be outdone in grandiloquence.

"Oh! laws," said Hagar, tossing her head with a pleased giggle; "how you city gemmen does flatter!"

Dan was not pleased with the remark, and betrayed it by an excited sniff.

"It's nat'ral talent does it," said he, "it's not obligatory to have lived in a city—your

principal male associations, Hagar, has always been of the most distinguished kind."

Hagar was tender-hearted, and she felt the reproach in Dan's words and manner.

"I knows that," she replied; "and I ain't like Diany Perkins, that's oles cracked arter every new feller that comes to meeting."

"It's the way of the fair sect," sighed Peter, with the air of a man who had thoroughly studied female nature; "allers was from Eve down to the fair Diany."

"Wal, I guess they ain't no wuss than the men," said Hagar, as ready to do battle for her sex as any modern champion of female rights could be.

"Man was made fust," said Dan, sententiously, "and consequently he is the superior being; woman was extricated from his rib."

"You needn't talk nonsense!" cried Hagar.

"Don't you believe wnat the minister preaches?" asked the horrified Dan.

"Don't want to hear no sich stuff," pursued Hagar, energetically; "women was made on their own hook as much as the men—don't tell me!"

"These are the objects for gemmen's adorableness," said Peter, blandly, remarking Dan's discomfiture.

"That's something like," cried Hagar.

"Didn't I allers say it?" asked Dan. "Isn't it my greatest felicitation to 'tend on you, Hagar? Hain't I watched the downfall of the snow with an anxious bussom, and rigged up the 'goose-nest' a purpose?"

"Oh! dear!" said Hagar, in a flutter. "These men flabergast you so: Now, Dan, jest go at them chickens—now do!"

"In course," replied Dan, "your commands is mine! I make no doubt but Mr. Peter will be most felicitated to aid me in the 'quests of beauty."

Now Peter would much have preferred his comfortable seat by the fire, but there was no resisting such an appeal, and he expressed his willingness in eloquent phrases.

"Get the big kettle over the fire, Hagar," said Dan, "and have the water bilin' to pick the chickens; I'll keep the pig till morning."

The two men went out to the barn to sacrifice the luckless fowls; and Hagar placed the kettle over the fire half full of water.

While she was awaiting the return of her fellow servant and his companion, Hannah entered the kitchen, accompanied by Laura de Montreuil. Hagar received the stranger with her best little bit of a courtesy, and began an account of her preparations for the morrow,

which was cut short by the frightened cacklings of the hens.

"They are killing those poor chickens," said Hannah, "I never can bear to hear their screams. Dear me! there they are right in front of the window."

Laura de Montreuil went to the casement and looked out. Peter and Dan were standing in front of the barn door, each holding a fluttering chicken—with a dexterous jerk of the hand the necks of the luckless fowls were dislocated in a breath, and they fell writhing and flapping their wings upon the snow.

Hannah crouched back and covered her face with both hands.

"You are nervous," said Miss de Montreuil, coolly.

"Oh! I never can look at them! There they bring the poor old turkey out to the log; see how the light shines over it. I have fed and petted him till it seems cruel almost as beheading a human being."

"It will not hurt him any the more because we are watching," said Laura, looking out of the window again.

It was a very clear night, and the snow had ceased falling for a time, so she could watch their operations quite at her ease.

The unfortunate turkey was taken out of his coop, flapping his wings desperately, and gobbling with fright and rage. But Dan, quite unconcernedly, dragged him to the wood-pile, seized his crimson head and held him down, while Peter, with a flourish of the axe, took his head clean off, and it rolled some distance from the domestic guillotine, bathing the snow with blood.

"What! actually crying," said Laura, turning toward Hannah again. "You are not very courageous."

"I hate to see anything hurt. It seems as if the blow hit me."

"What would you do if a war sprang up, and you saw men killed instead of chickens?"

"I couldn't, I should die! Could *you* see a man killed? Some one you had looked upon—loved perhaps?"

"That would depend," replied Laura. "I can imagine circumstances when I could look on without a shudder. There are wrongs for which only death can atone, and for which a man ought to die. Such wrongs, sometimes, spring only from the man one has loved."

Her eyes flashed dangerously. She looked, for the moment, like a woman who would indeed, if necessary, take revenge into her hands, and follow it up relentlessly to the end.

Hannah trembled at her words. She saw the effect they had produced, and added with a gay laugh,

"It is not probable that either of us will be called upon to help in bloodshed, so pray don't shiver so."

"You could not do it," said Hannah, "I know you could not."

"Well, never mind! I was only jesting. You had some order to give your woman, I think."

Hannah repeated her mother's commands to Hagar, and they went into the parlor again, but the sight of the poor chickens had quite destroyed Hannah's light-heartedness.

However, the bright, clear morning which succeeded was enough to cheer the most heavily burdened spirit, and Hannah was down in the kitchen at daylight, flying about as briskly as a humming-bird.

After breakfast was well out of the way, there were preparations to make for church, and de Montreuil and his sister were both amused and interested by the extreme importance attached to the day, and the odd manner in which it was celebrated in those primitive times.

When Hannah came down arrayed in her new scarlet cloak and dark dress, it would have been difficult to find a prettier picture than she made; and Laura nodded approval to the admiration which she saw sparkling in her brother's eyes.

All through the long sermon, de Montreuil's attention was more devoted to the charming girl opposite to him, than to the good pastor's sermon; but Arnold looked neither to the right nor to the left, though there was that in his face, which, to a keen observer, would have betrayed thoughts little in unison with the sacredness of the scene around.

Indeed, all the evening before, his manner had been singular, and Laura de Montreuil was almost irritated by the mixture of admiration and indifference which he exhibited. It did not seem studied, although if acquainted with the nature of the woman with whom he had to deal, he could not have adopted a course more likely to interest her feelings; but it appeared rather as if he were struggling with perplexing thoughts, from which he aroused himself with difficulty.

After church was over, there came one of the grand dinners for which Connecticut has attained a world-wide celebrity; and Mrs. Arnold yielded the palm to no housekeeper within three parishes. Upon that particular day the presence of her son and strange guests naturally stimulated her to higher efforts than usual, even upon that important occasion. The

most fastidious epicure in the world would have been obliged to confess that the repast was perfect of its kind.

Hagar declared that no such turkey could be found within the neighborhood of Norwich; and as for the pig, "He was a reg'lar pictur with a lemon stuck in his mouth, and his tail turned up behind."

The sleigh-ride had been determined upon the night before, and by half past one the double sleigh dashed up to the door, well filled with buffalo robes, the bells shining from the effect of Hagar's scouring, and jingling so merrily that they would have softened the heart of the sternest old Puritan that ever came over in the Mayflower.

"Oh! this is delicious!" exclaimed Laura. "I must sit by you, Mr. Arnold, for I am dying to drive. Paul can take care of Miss Hannah. Hurry, everybody, I am crazy to be off."

That was a sleigh-ride to be remembered! The day was wonderfully bright, the spirits of at least three of the party unusually high; and whatever anxiety disturbed Arnold, he had completely concealed it, appearing almost reckless from the contrast with his manner in the morning.

The bells rang out like a whole flock of summer birds; the snow flew about like showers of seed pearls; the sun lit up the white wreaths that had lodged upon the forest trees, until they sparkled like diadems of priceless jewels: and the merry party flew on over hill and plain, finding pleasure in everything about them, and ready to decide that it was, altogether, the pleasantest day they had ever spent.

"You see, Miss Laura," said Arnold, "that there are pleasures to be found in the country."

"A man is idiotic who lives anywhere else," cried de Montreuil, before his sister could answer. "I have seen more loveliness in my short stay here than in my whole life before," he added, with a glance at Hannah, that made her cheeks glow till they rivaled the cherry trimmings of her hood.

There was no cloud to mar their enjoyment until they had nearly reached home. Suddenly Miss de Montreuil pointed to a log house they were passing.

"That cabin looks very picturesque with the saw-mill back of it," she said. "Who lives there?"

Arnold's hand grasped the whip more tightly, and his face was turned away as he answered,

"A Mr. Leonard, or did, at least."

"And oh! brother," said Hannah, "Amy is not well. She looks so pale and thin—I noticed

her at meeting. She never goes out of the house hardly—I do believe she is going into the consumption."

Arnold made some trifling reply, but again there passed over his features the same anxious look, that settled at last into a hard, cruel expression that changed his whole face. But no one remarked it.

CHAPTER IV.

BUT Hagar's own private dreams of amusement are not to be forgotten. After the bells had been thoroughly scoured, the furs mended, and he had got all the work possible out of her, Dan never once referred to the promised sleigh-ride.

However, Hagar was not a woman to be trifled with after that fashion. She might bear a great deal, and be easily persuaded into doing half her companion's labor, but that sleigh ride was a thing she had set her heart upon, and have it she would.

The night before Thanksgiving she reminded Dan of his promise, but his attention was busy with other things, and it was not until she repeated her interrogatories very sharply that he heard at all.

"I say, you, is that ar' goose-nest ready?"

"In course it am, Hagar, this gemman neber forgets his word."

"So much the better," said Hagar, sniffing. "Mr. Peter, I 'spects we kin show you sleigh-ridin' that'll be hard to beat."

The next morning she spoke of it again, and Peter, never having seen a "goose-nest," asked for a sight of it.

Dan winked and screwed up his face in vain. There was no getting rid of the request, and, like an able general, he put the best face possible upon the matter.

"Sartin, Mr. Peter; do yerself the trouble to step out back of de barn," he said, with a majestic wave of the hand, and flourished himself out of the room, quite ready to be surprised at the disappearance of a "goose-nest," which had not existed for the last three years.

In a few moments the pair returned to the kitchen, where Hagar was awaiting Peter's opinion of the sledge. She was startled by a volley of exclamations from Dan, who entered like a man perfectly furious; and Peter followed, looking even more stupid than usual.

"De laws sake!" screamed Hagar. "Hev you gone and seen a ghost Thanksgiving mornin', Dan?"

"It's gone," gasped he, "quite gone!"

"What, the ghost? Oh! you didn't see one—

'taint true—oh! massy's sake, whar's my Misses? Ketch hold of me, somebody, I'm a gwine to faint! Was it raily a ghost, Dan?"

"I say it's gone!" he exclaimed, with great emphasis.

"The ghost?"

"No, the goose-nest, you fool; who's a talkin' about a ghost?"

Hagar came out of her spasm of fright, but she went off in a convulsion of rage, the like of which Dan had several times witnessed, and never failed to tremble before.

"Gone," she repeated, scornfully, "gone—don't tell me! Oh! you lazy wampire, you on-truthful smut-ball!" changing rapidly to hoarse tones of indignation. "It never was thar, yu brute you! And if it is gone, you'd better go arter it, for I'll make dis ere kitchen too hot to hold ye."

"Why, Hagar, Hagar!" expostulated Dan, retreating as fast as she advanced. "Don't be so corniptious! 'Taint my fault—somebody's stole it—I seed it thar back of the barn on de top of de hen-house with my own eyes, afore I went to bed, and so did Mr. Peter—didn't you?" he added, with an appealing look at that personage.

"Leastwise I heerd you remark that there was its resting-place," said Peter.

"Thar now, you see, Hagar! Don't be obstropolous! A gemman can't help what ain't his fault," pleaded Dan.

"Don't tell me," shouted the infuriated little woman. "I'll be even with yer, yes I will! Wait till de dinner comes! How much of dat turkey do yer think yer'll get? I knows dat turkey's a gwine to get lost 'tween de parlor and kitchen, jest like your goose-nest did. You'll see—only wait—dis isn't gwine to end here—you jest wait!"

Dan was touched upon his tenderest point—a heating he might have endured, but the thought of losing his dinner was agony. It was certainly necessary to mollify Hagar, for he knew that she was quite capable of keeping her word.

"Do wait a momentary," he said; "don't be kitin' at a pusson so, Hagar! Le's sec. Dar's de sleigh—dey's goin' out in dat! But dar's the cutter——"

"Wal?" asked Hagar, impatiently; "wal?"

"But massa lent dat to Miss Peasely dis blessed mornin'."

Hagar made a rush at him, but Dan retired behind Peter's portly form.

"Don't, now don't!" he cried. "Oh! I kin fix it! Clar up, Hagar, clar up—I've got it! Thar's an old crate up in the loft—thar's plenty of

straw—I'll cut a couple of poles for runners, and rig it up in no time."

"Do it now," said Hagar, "or yer'll git no dinner."

"In course, Hagar, but yer'd ort to be more scrumptious afore strangers. That ar' goose-nest was ready to receive yer lubly form, it raily was."

Hagar showed symptoms of reawakening ire.

"Wal, wal, never mind; I'se gwine to fix another—thar, thar!"

Dan retreated, and, for once, he really had to work. The "goose-nest" was rigged, but, owing to his haste, by no means with the care requisite. The wisps of straw were not firmly tied, and the runners were put on in a very unworkmanlike style. But nevertheless it was ready, and toward the middle of the afternoon it was decided to start.

Dan brought out a broken string of bells from the loft, remarking that "thar was music left in 'em yet," Mrs. Arnold furnished them with quilts, and everything was made as comfortable as circumstances permitted.

It was decided to drive round for Hagar's friend, Miss Dinah, and afterward they were to take the road over the hill, as that promised the best sleighing.

Hagar arrayed herself in her best linsey-woolsey petticoat. Her tresses were dexterously divided into innumerable little plaits, each tied with an end of red ribbon, and floating about her face in the most picturesque manner.

"As lubly as de mornin'," said Dan, when she appeared at the kitchen door, ready to start, and Peter echoed the opinion.

Hagar was only a woman, after all, and these compliments quite restored her good humor. The two gallants assisted her over the side of the crate, and deposited her in the snugest corner of the improvised vehicle. Peter and Dan followed, the latter taking the reins, and churring up at the old horse, till he started off at quite a respectable trot, the broken string of bells sending forth as melodious a jingle as could be expected under the circumstances.

They reached the dwelling of Miss Dinah without the slightest misadventure. That sable damsel was at leisure for the rest of the day, and received the proposal with the utmost delight.

She soon came out, entirely ready: and then the question arose where she was to sit, for the "goose-nest" was not over capacious, and it was quite a puzzle where this extra weight was to be deposited. Now Hagar and Dinah were the best possible friends—sharp speeches and backbiting counting for no more than with any

women, whatever their color may be; but Dinah had various little flirting ways, of which the former by no means approved, and never failed to check by any means in her power.

"And whar am I to seat myself?" asked Dinah, in her vivacious way.

"Take my place, and I'll set in yer lap," said Hagar.

"Oh! my," giggled Dinah, "why you'd quite quash me, Hagar! What funny little country-fied ways you hev. I'm sure dis city gemman isn't recustomed to dat way o' doin' tings."

"Oh! ob course not," said Peter; "de ladies must set in de gemmen's laps."

"Thar!" said Dinah; "do you hear, Hagar? Come, Mr. Dan, are ye goin' to let a lady go a-beggin' for a seat?"

Her intentions were quite too manifest, and Hagar would by no means submit to that sort of thing.

"Ef yer must set on a gemman's lap," she said, "take Mr. Peter's, for it'll be as much as Dan kin do to keep de ole hoss straight in de road."

There was no appeal from Hagar's decision, and Dinah resigned herself to it with as much grace as possible.

"My arms is quite at the service of the fair," said Peter, gallantly extending the aforesaid members, into which Dinah sank with a languishing grace that was quite wonderful, and a glance at Dan from under her drooping eyelashes, which that sable Romeo was too wise, arrant flirt though he was, to think of returning, for Hagar's sharp eyes were fixed upon him, and there was enough lustre left from her recent passion to make him extremely careful how he irritated her again that day.

They drove away quite merrily, for Hagar was, after all, the best little woman in the world, and Dinah was quite welcome to exert all her powers of fascination upon the stranger, so that she did not poach over Hagar's manor. They laughed and they chatted quite as gayly as their betters, and Hagar looked over toward Dan almost as languishingly as Dinah could have done.

But that insecure darkey was not easy in his soul, although, as he only betrayed it by an unusual number of grins, it was more effectually concealed than many a philosopher could have done. The truth was, soon after they started for the last time, that "goose-nest" began to wriggle about in the most unexampled manner, and sundry qualms, at least of fear, if not of conscience, seized Dan, as he remembered the hasty manner in which it had been thrown

together. But the rest were buoyant with heartfelt gayety, and as Dan, the more anxious he grew, only laughed the louder, their merriment was truly something comical to witness.

They passed Mr. Arnold's house, glided along very easily for some distance after, but suddenly Dan felt the goose-nest totter still more uneasily upon its foundation. Hagar noticed it, for she was a true daughter of Eve, always inquiring into things which were much better left alone.

"Dan," she exclaimed, "isn't der suthin' out of kilter 'bout dis 'ere goose-nest?"

"The wheietucle is as safe as the chariot of Potiphar," returned Dan: "don't be a bit uneasy, Hagar, fur Dandy holds the lines!"

Hagar was quieted for a few moments, but as they approached the foot of the hill, the old horse took it upon himself to start off in a sort of halting gallop, as lazy horses sometimes will at the beginning of a steep ascent, as if in desperation at the idea of being forced to mount it. The goose-nest twisted about more and more. Hagar was flung into Dinah's arms, and Dan precipitated on the top of the whole party, his leg sticking up, like the crowning ornament to a pyramid. There was a general shriek of consternation, but the cutter righted itself, and their composure was in a measure restored.

Suddenly the sound of bells attracted the general attention: the sleigh containing the young Arnolds and their guests was coming down the hill on its way home.

"Dar's young masser," exclaimed Dan; "now you'll see how I'll purss by in fine style."

He shouted to the old horse, and the willing animal gave a bound forward—the runners hit against a stump with a force which freed them completely from the crate, and away went the horse and poles at full speed up the hill. The goose-nest gave a lurch, upsetting Dan in the snow-bank, with his legs uppermost like a dancing Dervish; then performed a series of gyrations down the hill, gradually depositing its occupants in the most unexpected postures behind. Peter and Dinah clung fast together, and were thrown on to the top of a rail fence, against which the snow had banked itself, and there they remained, like two rare Ethiopian birds set up for a mark. Hagar clung to the crate with one hand, and one of the sticks of the crate held fast to her dress; and away they went, bump! clatter! bump! Now the crate was uppermost; now Hagar. The sticks rattled hoarsely against the stumps, and the little woman screamed in concert. Just as they reached the foot of the hill the crate gave a jump backward, and falling over Hagar, pinned her fast to the earth. Her

shrieks were alarming, and Dinah's nearly equaled them. As for Peter, he clung close to the fence, and Dinah held fast to his scalp lock quite unconsciously, while Dan's head was so deep in the snow that he was nearing the infernal regions in the most unexpected manner, when Arnold stopped his horse, and, springing out of his sleigh, extricated him from his unfortunate plight.

Hagar was the next victim to be rescued, and they lifted the crockery crate from off her, and assisted her to rise.

Poor Hagar! she was a sorry sight! Her holiday attire was a perfect wreck, her ribbon-tied wool fluttering about in the most disconsolate manner; but all this ruin was nothing in comparison to the state of feeling into which she had been thrown by the catastrophe.

She gave three separate shrieks of misery and affright; then the contending emotions gave way to a burst of overpowering rage. She flew at Dan like a wild cat, but he fortunately saw her in time; and, still pausing from his struggles in the snow, away he ran toward the horse, and Hagar after him, both yelling at every step with an energy which was truly appalling.

Dinah was at last induced to loose her hold of Peter's wool, and the two came to their senses sufficiently to quit the fence, and trust themselves to earth again. They trotted on merrily after the sleigh, and all reached the gate in time to see Dan sink breathless on the kitchen steps, and Hagar fall upon him, clutching wildly at his garments and shrieking,

"I'll show yer! I'll give yer goose-nest, you dirty ole smut-ball!"

It required the united strength of the party to lift Hagar off, and rescue Dan, who looked the most forlorn and desperate negro human eyes ever beheld. Mrs. Arnold found it necessary to confine Hagar in the cellar-way for a little time, while Dan hid himself in the hay-loft.

She and Hannah prepared the tea, but as soon as it was over, and their merriment consequent upon the late adventure had subsided, young Arnold made a plea of urgent business, and left the house.

CHAPTER V.

IN the woods upon the hill that rose half a mile beyond Mr. Arnold's house, stood two log houses that we have before mentioned. One of them was built quite near the road cut through the forest; and back of it, on the bank of the river, the rough saw mill sent up its grating music day after day, chiming in with the roar

of the waters as they leaped down over a precipice that formed a natural fall above.

But on Thanksgiving all was silent, save the voice of the waves sending up their perpetual hymn in the depths of the grand old woods. Within the log house there had been the usual preparations for the holiday which no moral Connecticut family, however poor, could by any possibility neglect. Not that old Joshua Leonard was any worse off in the world than many of his neighbors; although he still lived in the log cabin with two rooms which he had built when he first married. But the old man counted his savings with the utmost care. He wished for no "new fangled fixings," not he. Framed houses and boughten furniture were objects of his supreme contempt; and though his wife had for years droned out her little complaints at the superior style in which many of their neighbors lived, she was too inert successfully to combat her husband's close habits.

They had but one child, a daughter just grown into early womanhood, and as pretty a wild-wood blossom as could have been found in the whole state.

All that day Amy Leonard had been in a state of unwonted excitement. While dressing for "meeting" that morning, it seemed as if the blue short-gown would never be arranged to her satisfaction; and she was so long in arranging her cloak, that the farmer threatened to drive off the ox-sled without her. During the minister's long discourse she was strangely inattentive, sitting with her eyes fixed upon the floor, or stealing glances toward the pew where Mr. Arnold's family were seated.

After they returned home she was even more quiet than usual, and several times during the dinner her father chided her for her silence. At such moments she would rouse herself into cheerfulness, but the instant she felt herself unnoticed, the same anxious look crept over her face really pitiful to behold.

When the merry jingle of sleigh-bells attracted her attention, and she saw that gay, young party go dashing by, she stood watching them till they were out of sight, then crept down by the kitchen fire, and sat for a long time looking into it with dreary thoughtfulness.

As evening came on, she started at every sound, like one in expectation of some earnest summons. Every time a tree bough creaked, she sat listening as if waiting for a familiar step. Mr. Leonard was reading the Bible, and his wife dozing in her chair, so that, as usual, she sat unheeded.

It was eight o'clock, quite bed time in those

primitive days, and the old gentleman began making preparations for the night.

Suddenly there came in truth a knock at the door, which made Amy start to her feet, then crouch down again completely overcome with excitement.

"Who on airth is that?" exclaimed the old lady, startled out of her nap.

"I guess Amy knows," replied the farmer. "Come in," he added, in a louder voice, "'tain't worth while to stand for ceremony."

The door opened in obedience to his invitation, and young Arnold entered the room.

"Hello!" exclaimed Mr. Leonard. "I thought I see you to meetin'—how do you do? Why, mother, can't you wake up and see who has come in?"

"Why, sakes alive, ef it ain't Mr. Arnold's Ben," said the old lady, rousing herself effectually from her nap as the young man shook her hand. "Joshua said he see you to meetin', but I can't see an inch from my nose. Folks a stayin' with you, too, I heerd—do tell! Who be they now?—friends o' yourn, I reckon! Amy, can't you get a chair for a body when they drop in?"

All these remarks were delivered without a pause for breath, and while Arnold had turned to greet the young girl. She was deadly pale when he took her hand; her lips worked tremulously; and her eyes were raised to his face with a language more expressive than any words could have been.

Amy sank back into her seat, and Arnold seated himself with his face toward the old couple, purposely or by accident, screening her completely from their view.

"So you've come hum agin," pursued the old lady, who was rarely silent, and whose conversation was always delivered in a drawling tone that admitted of no variation, and without the slightest regard for periods. "'Spose you've got mighty stuck up notions there in the city—time Amy went to visit her cousin—'twasn't only her second cousin, anyhow, maybe third, for that matter, but we've allers called her cousin, she 'twas. Sally Wetherby, she came back with so many flamin' new idee's that I rally thought the critter'd drive me out of my mind. It's jest the same with young folks everywhere, it's only by living that we larn—and so you've got a sight of company to your house! Guess your mother don't thank you fur bringin' her more work—that's what she got her house fixed up fur, I reckon! Wal, I tell Joshua, it's queer how other folks can hev things as they ort be, and we keep on in the

same old way, not that I'm givin' to grumble, but a body likes to feel as good as other folks, but 'tain't no kind o' use to talk to Joshua, never was, and never will be; and there's Amy as like him as two peas, unless 'tis that her chin is like my folkses, but I never was no hand at seein' likenesses, though a good many is——"

"Wal, there, mother," interrupted her husband, "do hold on a minit! She's jest like a clock, wind her up and she'll go till she runs down."

"That's allers the way I'm treated in my own house," said the old lady, not plaintively, not even fretfully, but drawling away as before. "I ain't nobody here, never was—sich a difference in men folks—there's Mr. Arnold treats his wife like a born queen, but I'm no more 'count than a pan of hasty puddin'; Joshua never held that I was, though a good many folks is different, but I ain't one to grumble as everybody knows; but I dew say Miss Arnold is the fortunatest woman, and there's Hannah, she ain't poky like our Amy, and what ails *her* I don't know. Goin' to visit her cousin so much, she 'twas, Sally Wetherby, as I told you, though you know'd it afore, many a time she's slapped you when you was a little feller, and she here as high-tempered a critter as you'd find anywhere, and goin' to see her hain't done Amy no good; she's a notion of readin', too, and that I never will believe in, anyhow!"

"Come, mother," said Mr. Leonard, "you and I'll go to bed, I guess the young folks don't need us. There's more pine knots in the corner, Arnold—come along, Jemimy."

He lit a "dip" candle, fairly forced the old lady into the other apartment, which was used as their bed-room, and the youthful pair were left alone.

The girl was trembling all over from the agitation which she had struggled so hard to repress during the past half hour.

"Amy," whispered Arnold, in a low, sweet voice, that went to the inmost depths of her heart, "Amy!"

He bent forward and drew her toward his chair. She half knelt before him, and hid her face upon his shoulder with a flow of tears that she could no longer restrain.

"Crying!" he said, "how is this, Amy? Look up—there, there, what a nervous little thing!" He lifted her face and pressed his lips upon her forehead. "Don't cry any more, or I shall think that you are not glad to see me."

"The day has been so long—I thought you did not mean to come," she murmured, wiping

the tears from her eyes, and forcing back the sob which rose to her lips. "I have waited three whole months for this meeting, and to-day has seemed longer than the whole time before."

"I could not come until this evening; you must remember it is a year since I had seen my mother, and she will scarcely let me out of her sight now."

"She did to-day, it seems!" exclaimed Amy, excitedly. "Oh! I saw you driving by without even a look toward the house; at church it was the same thing, not even a glance for me."

"Hush! hush!" he said, "your father will hear you."

"Sometimes I don't care," she returned, with an energy foreign to her character; "I would like to die! There have been days when it seemed that I should go mad if I could not get out of these dreary woods and find you again."

"Come out and walk," whispered Arnold: "they are asleep in the other room, and we shall waken them."

Amy threw a heavy cloak and shawl about her, and followed Arnold's cautious footsteps out of doors. She went passively, as she would have obeyed him had he bidden her go forth from that forest home never to return.

It was a glorious night, the moon at its full, and not a cloud in the sky. There was no wind, but the air was very cold, and the low shivering of the pine trees around them sounded like the murmur of distant voices. The rush of the river was strangely distinct, and to Amy's fancy it sounded like a weird warning that she could not understand, but which made her tremble with a vague sense of approaching ill.

He drew her arm into his, and led her down the bank to the old saw mill.

"We are sheltered from the wind here," he said, as they sat down upon the carriage on which the logs were placed.

"How strangely your voice sounds to-night, Arnold!"

"You are fanciful and nervous, Amy; I believe you read too many story books; I shall not send you any more."

"Who are those strangers at your house?" she asked, abruptly.

"Old friends of mine; I brought them here because the gentleman wishes to buy land, and my father has some to dispose of."

"And the lady?"

"She naturally accompanied her brother."

"Oh! yes, I understand! I know very well who it is—Miss Laura de Montreuil—I saw her driving by one day when I was in New Haven."

"She lives in New York."

"That makes no difference—she was pointed out to me as a great heiress."

"Are you sure of that?" Arnold asked, carelessly, but it was in truth a question which greatly interested him.

"Very sure! Oh! I see it all; she has money, and so you, with all the world, will be at her feet! Oh! Arnold, Arnold!" she added, with sudden passion, "is this keeping your word? Is this what you promised when you induced me to deceive my parents?—to take upon myself a load of secrecy that wears my life away?"

"Would you be glad to be freed from it?" he asked, almost brutally.

"Oh! anything, to feel the light-hearted girl I was once."

"There is no reason why you should not."

"You mock me," she said, with sad reproach; "perhaps I deserve it! But oh! Arnold, you do not know what I have suffered since we parted! That secret wedding—that return to my old home to feel myself so changed—unable to speak freely with any! Oh! it has been dreadful!"

"Why, Amy, you are silly! Did you take a little jest for earnest?"

"Jest!—a jest! What do you mean?"

"That ours was not a real marriage."

She rose to her feet, and looked full in his face with a wild passion that was like insanity.

"Then God help me, I have been mad indeed!" She pressed her hands to her forehead like one trying to remember. "You speak falsely!" she cried; "you have some end in view; you have spoken falsely! We were married! When I went to New Haven you used to meet me everywhere: on my way to the school where my cousin sent me—in the evening. You told me that you loved me, and you did—oh! you did! You begged me to consent to that secret wedding, that you might feel I indeed belonged to you——"

"It was no marriage, Amy."

"It was—it was! Some form may have been neglected—there was no publication—but that man was a minister! It was a marriage! Arnold, I am your wife!"

There was an agony of entreaty in her voice that was heart-rending; but Arnold's resolution was taken, and an effigy of stone could not have been colder or more immovable.

"I tell you no, Amy!"

She neither wept nor moaned. She stood before him, gazing in his face, without the power to turn away her eyes.

"And you do not love me?" she said, in a hollow voice. "You came here to tell me that."

"I do love you, Amy, indeed I do!"

"But you had some reason for coming with that falsehood on your lips! Tell me at once that you do not love me."

"I do, Amy! Circumstances may part us, but believe me you are very dear to me still, very dear."

"Are you going away forever?" she gasped: "going?"

"I cannot tell! Strange events are on the eve of awaking. No man can tell what is to come."

"Are you going to leave me?—will you never acknowledge me as your wife?"

"You are not my wife, Amy."

"I am! Oh! I am! Are you going away? Answer me."

"Very soon. And it may be years before I return."

She uttered no word, but her strength suddenly gave way, and she slid to his feet and lay motionless upon the icy boards.

He raised her and bore her in his arms toward the house.

"It is better so," he muttered; "to-morrow I shall be away—better so."

He made no effort to revive her, but he carried her softly to the house, entered it gently, and placed her carefully upon a chair near the fire.

Without even a farewell kiss, he went away, revolving in his mind plans of future grandeur in which the broken-hearted creature he had just left never once intruded.

How long Amy Leonard remained insensible she never knew. When consciousness came back she was alone in that darkened room. The fire had burned down, and the quivering embers only sent up transient gleams. The sighing of the pine trees and the rush of the waters were the only sounds that reached her ear.

"Arnold!" she moaned, "Arnold!"

Only the low night wind made reply. Amy roused herself to the consciousness that he had left her forever. She started from the chair, as if she would have gone in search of him; but her very limbs seemed paralyzed by the numbing weight upon her heart, and she fell back in the chair, utterly powerless.

She did not move again for hours. The moon swept up the sky, till its full light played in at the little casement and illuminated the room.

Still there she sat, gazing fixedly at the

dying embers, shivering at intervals, but making no other effort to rise, scarcely comprehending what had befallen her, but so stunned and shaken in every nerve, that it seemed as if

she would only awaken to the ravings of insanity, when aroused from that fearful stupor which enveloped her whole being.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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THE LOST PATRIMONY.

BY A. L. OTIS.

My patrimony was a neat little fortune, and I was just twenty-one when I came into possession of it. After duly shaking my head to arouse any wisdom that might be slumbering there, I said to myself,

"I have enough income to live a life of leisure, and moderate luxury. I will plunge into no business to drown my best years in care. I am just at an age to enjoy the pleasures of life—and, when I get tired of them, as folks say they always do—then I shall turn naturally to the excitement of business for occupation. Time enough to grow rich then. I scout the idea of being a mere money maker now."

But at the end of the first year, I had not only used my income, but had chipped no small corner off my principal. I continued to nibble at it the next year, and when December came I said, "Oh! well, what remains is not worth saving. My friends tell me that my money has been the ruin of me, and that I should have been better off if I had never had a cent I didn't earn; so here goes with the last of it, to further my prospects, by leaving me with nothing but hand and brain to depend upon. Pity I haven't had a jollier time spending it though."

Before the end of another year, I paid away my last five dollar bill, having inscribed thereon the whole amount of regret I felt at the necessity of parting with it, in the half serious words, "Go, last of thy kind, and find a better master."

Then I looked about me, and made up my mind how to proceed. To begin, I called up my landlady, and said *nonchalantly*,

"My dear madam, I have the misfortune to tell you that I have no more of the convenient commodity called money. If I remain here, you have only the hope that, some day, I shall find employment, and be able to resume payment, and clear off arrearages. There is much risk in this. Will you risk it?"

My landlady, Quaker and stoic as she was, yet gave way to a little change of color, in surprise at this information. Not without pondering—for she doubted my story, for how could a gentleman reduced to his last penny have such a comfortable, careless countenance?—not

without pondering and a shade of dubiety, did she reply,

"Thee's always paid up readily. I don't see what's the matter now; but any way, I'll trust thee a few weeks."

I couldn't stomach that. I never afterward owed that woman a cent, let what might go to pay her; and this first experiment gave me a wholesome horror of even the smallest debt, whether of money or assistance. I had not chosen my friends for qualities which might be valuable to me in adversity, and I preferred not putting any of them to the proof in any way, to having my eyes opened painfully.

I looked about eagerly now for something to do. I had always said that a man must be a fool not to find work; but when the time came to look for it, I found the search a difficult one. So many diverse things must concur. Some one in a business I liked must be in want of me. He must be ready to give me a sufficient salary, and a post I was fitted for. He must have a congenial temper, and principles I could approve. He must demand no capital of me, yet must grant me a position in the firm not derogatory to my years, or dignity, or social position, as son and heir of the late Mr. O—. He must be willing to suppose that my past course fitted me for trust, that being able to dissipate a considerable fortune in a very short time constituted me a business man, whom it was desirable to secure at once, for the advantage of all parties concerned.

Such a person it was not easy to meet with. I met none like him. I tried one or two situations, but owing to the suspicions almost every one entertained of my unsteadiness, I found them intolerable. After a year of change, make-shift, and harassing anxiety, I fully understood what a key to success I had thrown away in my patrimony. I had possessed a power, a lever which would have lifted every obstacle from the path to fortune, and now I had only my personal force to clear the way for me. A moneyless man, with a fortune to make, is like a sculptor with a block of marble and an ideal form in his brain, but no chisel or mallet—and none attainable—unless he turn tool maker, and fashion them himself.

My friends kept judiciously remarking to me, that if I would only put a little capital into this business, or that one, which was coining gold, I should soon fill my pockets.

"If it rains soup, and you've no spoon, what odds is it to you?" says the old proverb.

Finally I determined to become a real-estate agent. I got a license and an office, hung out my shingle, and advertised. My friends put some places into my hands for sale, and I waited for purchasers. They were slow in coming, and waiting was dull work.

I was too eager for business to read. I sat impatiently fretting a week or so, my only amusement gazing curiously at the swift whirl of business men past my window, all with calculating brows, and faces full of work—or, taking constitutionals, and coming back to see my lonely office boy, undisturbed by callers, turning forlorn summersets on the wide window-sill.

I should have gone distracted with this solitary confinement, if two fat women exhibitors had not pitched their tabernacles in my neighborhood. Large paintings of the rival beauties stretched along the house fronts, flaunting defiance in each other's faces, and challenging the public to a comparison of their charms. Before one house a band played that popular and suggestive tune, "Root Hog or Die;" while the rival musicians wailed out, "Love Not," in superfluous warning to all-gazers upon the charmer within. These tunes, alternated with Yankee Doodle by both bands, made day and night ridiculous: so I still could laugh.

My friends dropped in—now and then—but did not stay long. I had no wine, cigars, or sporting intelligence to give them. They found me very "slow," poor fellows.

A month passed. My office rent became due—my boy's wages—my landlady's, and washer-woman's bills. No help for it, my watch must go—and it went. Another month. My books must go—and they went. Another month. My wardrobe must suffer—and it suffered. Another month, and I was as much like a hang dog, as a man can be and keep a hat on his head. Mine was just balanced, and that was all, so dejectedly low did I hold my gloomy countenance.

But after all was sold that I could possibly part with, and I had got over that chaffering business, I looked up again, and cocked my hat as usual. I got my landlady to move me up to the garret, and I doctored off two meals a day. I did well enough with one.

I also let out half of my office to another poor fellow, who could not afford to rent one. He

was only able to pay about a quarter of the rent of mine; so, to make all square, he took my office boy's duties, and that valiant hunter was dismissed, not without tears on his part.

I got to extremities at last; slept in my office, in as much of a bed as could be made out of my coat and a felt hat. Twelve cents a day nourished me.

Inquirers about the properties I had for sale came occasionally. But what ideas they had! Mr. A—— held his place at twelve thousand, (worth six possibly) and wouldn't take a cent less. Mr. B—— wanted it terribly—would give three thousand for it, not a cent more! I, between them—frantic to make a sale, and realize a commission—exhausted every power of mind and body in persuasion, without effecting a compromise. My two opponents held out, and continue to do so to this day, to the torment of the real-estate agents who now have them in hand.

One glorious day, I effected an exchange of two properties. My palm itched for my commission, which old Mr. Q—— was, by agreement, to pay. It was an insignificant one, to be sure, but it was enough to regale me upon beefsteaks for a month to come, over my usual expenses. So it was a weighty matter to me. I planned out a whole day's meals—yes, a whole week's—so as to employ my leisure hours agreeably in a way which my prospects now rendered justifiable. Before this it had been breaking the tenth commandment even to think of beefsteaks. I also dreamed of a new coat. The one I wore—my last—was a light summer cloth, and the weather was now ripping cold. I went so far in anticipatory extravagance, as to throw away a blacking-box, which had yet a rim of the precious compound around its bottom edge, that might have given one more "polit," as Biddy says, to my shoes. It was long before I bought another box, for Mr. Q—— *never* paid up!

After one week of tedious days with light dinners, and another weary seven days of lagging hours unbeeftasted, I made inquiries about Mr. Q——, and alas! learned that never paying up was a little habit of his, which his friends had vainly tried to break him of. His creditors, therefore, had no hope, unless they had the money to make him pay by the urgency of the law.

Things took a turn at last. I had a beautiful little furnished cottage, a few miles from town, put into my hands. It was a very desirable property, and now at last my office was lively with inquirers.

One morning, a handsome carriage stopped before my door, and from it stepped a pretty

old lady, a Mrs. K——, whom I had often met at parties, who had indeed once been an acquaintance of my mother's. She knew me at once, and after some polite references to old times, she asked about the cottage.

After I had told her all I knew of the terms, &c., she said, with a voice sweet, and coaxing in its playful tones,

"I want that cottage exceedingly. I must have it—but I *do* not want to pay cash for it. Indeed I cannot, unless I first sell my tiresome brown stone house on — Avenue. If you can only effect an exchange for me—oh! I will be so pleased! I will give you anything to do it," and she named a handsome sum.

My heart gave a leap for my throat. "I shall be happy to do my best for you," I said aloud, and thought, "only too happy to get such a windfall!"

I bowed her to her carriage. There sat, leaning back, "a phantom of delight"—her daughter.

She was just as much of a phantom to me, and as attainable by me for having and holding, as if she had been formed of ether, and was not the "sweetest piece of painted flesh" that ever nature dyed. This I growled into my own comprehension, as I turned away after the bewildered stare I had given her, and shut my office door upon the impertinent street, that might be disposed to look into my face, perhaps, and read its chagrin there. Her mother had been a long time arranging her flounces upon entering the carriage; and before I could shut its door, I had stolen many looks into that bewitching face, quite enough to have her image vividly before me all that day long.

Two days afterward, I went with Mrs. K—— to look at the cottage. She called for me in her carriage; and her daughter was there too. I showed them the grounds, and rooms with zeal, and answered all their pretty questions with delight. I was so happy that the fates took offence at it.

In pulling up a stiff, rusty bolt, which held one of the long windows shut, I was obliged to use some muscular strength, and my treacherous coat, buttoned to hide my seedy vest, burst down one of the shoulder-blades, where it was worn uncommonly thin.

I was desperate. I felt my cheeks set hard, and I stalked about with a bunch of shirt sticking out at one shoulder; the mirrors, too, showing me the figure I cut at every turn.

Well—what odds was it? They liked the place too well to be very nice in the bargain for it. The owner agreed to exchange it for the city property, and I won my commission.

That night I did my first, and last job at tailoring; and the next day, in my mended coat, I waited upon Mrs. K——, to let her know the final result of my negotiations. She was out, but her daughter received me, and had still much to ask about "that lovely cottage." My answers were all long ones. The next day I sat in my office, savage, because the excitement of the affair being over, I had leisure to think what a fool I had been in throwing away a fortune, which would have entitled me to dream as I pleased of a certain lady; when the carriage drove up again, and, looking over the half curtain, I saw that Miss K—— sat in it alone. I hastened out.

She greeted me with some embarrassment, and I colored up too—only because she did—(far gone, you see.)

"Mamma was too ill to come out to-day," she said, "so she sent me with this letter and package for you. She did not send it by John, because she wished me to tell you, as well as I can, how very much she thanks you for your obliging zeal in securing us the pretty cottage we had both set our minds upon. She also begs that you will give us the pleasure of your company to a little tea-party, we give at our new house—warming, two weeks from next Wednesday. She hopes you will come."

I am seldom flustered, and can generally "behave myself" before folk," so I answered properly, accepted the invitation upon the strength of the new suit I felt must come out of the packet I held in my hand—and bowed an adieu.

Having the office to myself just then, I tore off the envelope, and therein I found the specified sum in gold and bills. I caressed the strangers. I never knew money to look really pretty before, but this did—it was beautiful. After I had counted, and stowed away the gold, I took up the paper envelope, and for the sake of the slight sweet perfume left by the gloved hand I had received it from, I kissed it devoutly. I then began to fold up the notes, laughing a little at the woman's way of sending the money itself, instead of a check on a bank—when something caught my eye. It was a five dollar bill with writing on the back, "Go, last of thy kind, and find a better master."

"Well," said I, giving it a spiteful twist, "here you are again! Be so slippery another time, will you?" Then I chuckled at a conceit that occurred to me. "I have got my old fortune by the tail," I said, "and clap ears and bells upon me if I don't hold fast, and haul it backward till I clutch it again!" I did so—no need to tell my ups and downs—but the result

of my unrelenting efforts, and my pertinacious resolution, is property to about the same amount as my father left me."

I sit in the library of the K—— cottage, inditing this, after a lapse of five years from the date of receiving my first earnings. Close at hand is—the Phantom of Delight. She is rattling off crash towels on a sewing machine. This is written, impromptu, for her eye, in answer to a question put an hour ago by her.

She asked for some money to buy "our Charley" a coral and silver tooth-cutter. I gave her an old five dollar bill. She pored over it, and exclaimed, "Oh! poor fellow! it almost makes me cry! See here, love! his last. I wish I could give it back to him! Who did you get it from?"

"I'll tell you by-and-by," I said, and took this sheet of paper. Yes, dear, dear girl—

pitying, sweet heart—you did once give the poor fellow who wrote those words, not only his note again, but with it the heart to win all the boundless treasures he now possesses!

* * * * She has read it, and boxed my ears like a stout south breeze, for not kissing the envelope before I counted the gold—woman!

For this infringement of my dignity, I have fined her five dollars, and recovered my bill. She, in revenge, declares that this scrap shall be fashioned into "an article," and given by her own intrepid hand to the public. I record this to her confusion; and here write down my opinion that she is welcome to all the five dollar bills she ever gets for it, and that we shall see if she dares carry out her threat. Signed,

J. Q. O.

(You see, sir! A. G. O.)

THE RULING PASSION.

BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1860, by Mrs. Ann S. Stephens, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, for the Southern District of New York.]

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 154.

CHAPTER VI.

On the day after Thanksgiving, Arnold and his friends were to have returned to New Haven, and, short as his visit had been, the young man was more than anxious to leave his home again at the earliest possible moment; but in this matter he had a will, strong as his own, and a caprice far more uncertain, to contend against. Laura de Montreuil would not quite confess herself overtaxed by the journey she had taken only three days before, but she found the old homestead so pleasant, the parlor so warm and easy, when contrasted with the drifting snow and keen frost out of doors, that Mrs. Arnold's sweet persuasion to remain a little longer was met with far more favor than Arnold's protestations that business compelled him to go at once, urged with a dictatorial, half insolent, air, that made the good housewife shrink away with a pale, troubled expression of the eye painful to look upon.

Mademoiselle de Montreuil laughed. "And so they are all afraid of you, my hero! I see how it is—you won't even be persuaded. Now there, go kiss your blessed little mamma, and tell her you won't go away for the next thousand years, at least."

She pointed her slender finger toward him an instant, then dropped her hand and took the fire-screen from her lap, shading her laughing face as she saw the haughty frown lower over his face.

"What! you are seriously determined to be rude to that angel, and inhospitable to us," she said, with a face dark as his own, "I beg your pardon. It is not my pleasure, nor that of Paul, I dare answer, to leave this neighborhood for a day or two yet; there is some fine scenery about the Falls, and a picturesque cabin, or two, perched on the banks, that I have a fancy to sketch; but we shall not force ourselves on your hospitality. There must be a tavern somewhere in the hill-side town yonder."

Arnold's face had cleared off; an impatient curve of the lip remained, but that was directly softened into a forced smile. He did not heed

the anxious face of his mother, but stole close to Laura's chair, and, bending over her, with a grace that was more than half command, softened it as he would, whispered a few words that sent the blood burning to her face.

"It was because I thought you were tired of my society," he said, fixing his glance upon her with a power that dazzled her eyes more completely than the fire had done.

"But I like your mother, and that little saintly sister, enough to put up with the rest," she said, with an attempt at audacious cheerfulness.

"And it is not for my sake?" he whispered.

"Hush! your mother."

"Oh! I had forgotten. Well, mother, it is determined, business or no business, we are to remain a day or two longer. Will that please you?"

Mrs. Arnold brightened pleasantly, but this agitation had left her rather pale; and as Arnold lifted his eyes earnestly to her face, he saw something there that made him thoughtful.

His look of eager solicitude brought the tears into her eyes; while the gentlest of all smiles hovered on his lips.

"Are you pleased, mother?"

Mademoiselle de Montreuil had left the room, or the good lady would never have given way to her tears; that kind of sensibility was not much in fashion with the New England mothers of that generation. They prayed more than they wept, and hard work left them little time for anything more than an exhibition of honest family affection, now and then.

"What is it troubles you, mother?" said Arnold, pressing that pale face to his bosom, with the purest gleams of tenderness that existed in his nature. "Now that the excitement is off, I see that you look worn and feeble. Is anything really the matter?"

The old lady sighed heavily; but his tenderness comforted her, and, drawing from his bosom, she wiped her eyes, trying hard to smile.

"Yes, I have something. Come with me a

little, I want to talk with you. This idea of going away so soon frightens me. I didn't expect it, Benedict, and was putting everything off to the last, like a poor coward, as I am."

Again Arnold's face grew black. Half the time it past under the thundercloud of some passion. From his boyhood it had always been so, but the contrasts of cheerful humor and persuasive gentleness had a wonderful fascination when they arose.

He followed his mother up stairs into her bedroom, a square room in the southwest corner of the house, where the turbulent heart in his bosom had first begun to beat.

The room was close; though it was now somewhat deep in the morning, the green paper blinds were all rolled down, and, notwithstanding the clear, cold air without, a heavy, dead atmosphere filled the gloomy twilight—an atmosphere that Arnold felt at once, and the color in his face deepened into fierce flushes.

"Is this *my* father?" he exclaimed, standing up to the bed, and tearing the counterpane down from where it was huddled over the old man's face.

Mrs. Arnold laid her hand on his arm, growing pale, and holding her breath. No fault could make her forget the husband of her youth.

"Is this *my* father?" Arnold exclaimed again, shaking off her hold, and grasping the exposed shoulder with a violence which made the old man lurch heavily in his bed, and mutter to be left alone.

"It is my husband, Benedict, and your father. Never forget that. Take your hand away; it was not for this I brought you here!"

Arnold slowly withdrew his hand, but looked fiercely back at the bed. As the gentle mother strove to draw him away, his fingers worked and clenched themselves, as if he would gladly have turned and strangled that old man in his inebriate slumber. The mother's face was full of sorrow; his, the only son, was black with anger.

"And how long has this been?" he said, when the door was closed behind them.

"Ever since you left us. I think he missed you, Benedict, and so went oftener to town. It was very lonesome here evenings, with nobody but Dan to order, and us to talk with, you know."

"Do you mean to find fault with me for going, mother? as if a son must stay at home forever, to keep his father from becoming a drunkard!"

"Hush! Benedict, nobody ever called him *that* in my hearing before."

"But I dare say he is called *that* all over

town," answered the son, savagely; "and these French people, this splendid young lady, will soon find it out."

"No, no, I will persuade him. You will help me—he is so amiable and kind at all times. Last night, he saw a light in the out-room, and, thinking your friends were up, wandered about in the cold till he was almost frozen. I was sitting up, you know, and at last saw him against the window, with his breath frozen white in his beard, and his hat off: he had lost it by the gate."

"And *she* might have seen this!"

"No, no; he would have frozen in the snow rather than make you blush, Benedict. He had memory enough to say that, so don't think too hard of him."

"But what gave rise to this? He was a temperate man, as any in Norwich, when I went to New Haven."

"I don't know. It has always been a mystery to me, son; but, since his store was burned down, and the insurance money paid from England, he's never been the same man, always restless, always wanting to be in motion."

"Since his store was burned down!" faltered Arnold, and a dusky glow filled his eyes, and flushed his face all around them; "and the insurance money paid, surely he does not grudge me that little start in life."

"No, no. Of course not!" cried the mother, eager to clear her husband. "I did not know that you had the money. He never speaks of the fire; but always goes away, and comes home as you see, if any one else mentions it. Sometimes people twit him about it, I'm afraid."

"Twit him about it! What do you say, madam?"

"Madam! my son; madam to your mother!"

"Well, I beg your pardon; but you spoke of some one twitting my father—who?" The voice in which Arnold asked this was terrible.

"Yes, he said it once," answered the little woman, beginning to tremble, she scarce knew why; "but he wasn't quite himself, you know; and—and—I don't like to ask questions at such times. When you came home, I thought, perhaps, you might be able to help me understand it!"

"Me! me?"

"It was one of my delusions, I dare say," answered Mrs. Arnold, shrinking from her son's glance.

"One of your delusions! Why, you didn't have these fancies formerly, mother. I thought if there was a woman on earth every way above them, you were that woman."

"Did you, Benedict? Was I really so smart as that? Well, well, as one gets old, and sees the sun of life going down, and the shadows coming on, it makes a difference, my son; and then I'm used to sitting up late at nights now, and that weakens one so; but am I altered so much?"

There was something so earnest and touching in that sweet voice, that Arnold felt the tears stealing to his eyes. The strange moisture fairly startled him. He dropped the hand which he had half lifted to her head, and turned away, biting his lips angrily.

"Come, come, it isn't for me to torment you in this way, Benedict," said the kind mother. "Come this way, I want to show you something."

Arnold followed her into the next room, where a large oaken chest, clamped with brass, stood between the front windows. She opened the chest, and revealed a store of fine home-made linen, white as snow, and delicately fine pillow-cases, fringed at the edge, and sheets, with broad hems, daintily stitched. "Hannah had her setting-out ready ever so long ago," said the good woman, looking back over her shoulders as she knelt before the chest. "I began spinning and weaving for her when she was a baby; but this was done since you left us. Hagar wanted to help, but I was selfish and would do it all myself. So don't marry any one that'll be above using homespun, or what would all this be good for?"

Dear soul, how transparent her little artifice was! She had no courage to say how much too fine she thought the elegant French woman down stairs, and so made this excuse to bring on the subject, believing herself the most crafty and wicked little woman in the world to attempt it, quite a demoralizing example for her own son.

Arnold was rather softened by the sight of the linen. It reminded him, painfully, of those quiet hours when he had hung on his mother's chair, while her two hands were so busy at the distaff, and her little foot danced on the pedal of the flax-wheel, which now stood unbanded in the garret above. He remembered so well how she would dip her fingers into the cocoanut shell hanging over the flyers, sprinkle the drops over her shoulders, and then kiss them from his face, when she saw him grow angry, as he was sure to do.

How pretty she looked in those days! There were roses on her cheeks then, and no strawberry was ever of a sweeter crimson than her mouth. But there was a great change. He had not minded it so much, at first; but now, with the

full light shining over her from an uncourtained window, a host of fine wrinkles threaded that pure forehead, and the pallor of her face was unnatural. Surely his mother could not be well.

The worst man that I ever saw—one who confessed to having murdered sixty persons in a piratical career, without a single expression of repentance—began to speak to me of his mother, and he wept like a little child. All those atrocious murders had failed to wash the holy image of a mother from his soul. Then, do not think it unnatural that Benedict Arnold, in his youth, should have loved the little woman, kneeling at his feet with a force of affection that a better man might not have possessed. With him all affections and all sentiments were passions, but the most sacred that ever dwelt in that ambitious heart, was this love, which made his haughty lip tremble, and his eyes dim, while she exhibited her treasures.

"Oh! Benedict, don't, or you'll make me cry too!" she said, quite heart-smitten by his look. "Don't feel hurt at what I said. Of course you can marry anybody on earth that suits you—why not? The brighter and handsomer, all the better, of course; and, if she's rich——"

"She must be rich," said Arnold, sharply, "I want no wife to drag me down."

"Oh! my son, what need——"

"The more need, mother, from what I have seen this morning. Tell me, is my father in debt?"

"I—I don't know. He never tells me anything now."

"Well, that I can learn from him as we stay over awhile. I suppose he will manage to get sober before we go."

Mrs. Arnold shrunk, and the color came to her face. He saw it, and relented a little.

"But we will not talk of this any more. He must not be careless of your comforts, that is all. So now, mother, close the chest, and let us sit down on it a moment, while you tell me how this lady strikes you all at home. Something a little out of the usual run, I fancy?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Arnold, doubtfully, "very; that is, we haven't any girl in Norwich in the least like her."

"Handsome though. Isn't she, mother?"

"Oh! yes. A great deal handsomer than—yes, I was going to say, than Amy Leonard; not near so nice, though; but then fine ladies don't care about being nice, I dare say; this one is handsome as a bird, especially with those white ostrich plumes in her bonnet all flying away with her curls. How the people did stare when

"you drove by the meeting-house, Thanksgiving day, just at prayer time; it was as much as the minister could do to keep his eyes shut! I was sorry about the disturbance, but then, for the life of me, I couldn't help looking out."

"Then it made a little commotion among the natives? I thought so."

"Indeed how could that be helped? The Norwich people haven't forgotten that your father was one of the richest merchants among 'em before that fire."

Arnold was looking at his mother, but his eyes fell as she named the fire.

"Oh! I was wrong to name it again; but what could any one do? If you had staid a moment longer in the store, who could have saved your life? and what was building or goods compared to that? I never thought of blaming you."

"And who has? I ask again," said Arnold, fiercely, "I was only a boy then. Did they expect me to put out a raging fire single-handed?"

"Indeed how could they? But we were speaking of the young lady down stairs. Tell me more about her. Is she really from over sea?"

"Originally, yes, mother; but for a year or two she has lived in Canada, where her brother inherited a great business from his father. Lately they have been in New York, and traveling about. This young lady was educated in Paris, I am quite sure, for she has seen the court, and there is a title in the family."

Mrs. Arnold held her breath.

"Her grandfather held some place under the king; and she was educated in a convent."

"A convent! a Catholic!" cried Mrs. Arnold, clasping her hands in intense dismay. "Oh! my son!"

"Does that frighten you, mother?" said Arnold, laughing carelessly. "Never mind, if she chooses to fall in love with me, I'll soon make her forget that. If I tell her to be sprinkled in the meeting-house, or dipped in the Falls at high flood, she'll do it, mother, or I'll know why."

"What, that high-spirited, handsome girl?" smiled the old lady, flushed with the idea he so insolently brought forward. "How can you talk so, Benedict? One would think you'd been in Paris, too. But don't talk any more nonsense about our visitor, she's as bright and beautiful as a bird; but what is that to old-fashioned people like us? You haven't asked a word about Amy Leonard yet, and that puts me in mind to send Dan, with the cutter, after her this evening. She'll expect it, poor girl! she's not been very well this fall; stays away from meeting, and is getting a little unsocial, I'm

afraid. I hope your coming will cheer her up—such friends as you were once; only these things never last with children."

"No, mother, they seldom last," said Arnold, rising from the chest; "so, perhaps, it'll be as well not to send for Amy; I've been to visit the family, and they won't expect anything more."

Mrs. Arnold sighed; with every thread of the linen folded beneath her she had woven a motherly thought of Benedict and Amy Leonard; and now this French girl, with the feathers, must come dashing out from a foreign convent, and tear all her delicate cobwebs of fancy into shreds. The dear little woman wished to be hospitable, and there was something very grand and imposing about the idea of a daughter-in-law who had been educated in Paris—who had seen the king—possessed a title somewhere in the family, and no doubt owned heaps on heaps of property; but still the lovely face of Amy Leonard came closest to her heart, and she felt inexpressibly saddened by her son's triumphant manner.

Mrs. Arnold arose from the linen chest, and sighed as she locked up her treasures.

"Then you think I'd better not send for Amy?" she said, with a gleam of fresh courage. "She's lonesome up there, I know."

"She'd be more lonesome with Mademoiselle de Montreuil: a wren and bird of Paradise together, dear mother. When I come to Norwich, it is to see you and the rest of 'em: don't let me be tormented with girls."

With a careless wave of the hand, which Mrs. Arnold longed to construe into a permission to send for her favorite, Benedict moved toward the head of the stairs, for a cheerful voice was calling him from below.

It was Paul de Montreuil in a laughing skirmish with his sister.

"Arnold—Arnold. Come settle this matter." Benedict appeared at the head of the stairs, laughing through all his ill-humor.

"Well, what is it?"

"We have been managing a sleigh-ride. Peter and I have been into town, and brought back a cutter that skims the snow like a hawk, with a whole nest of bear skins. You never saw such a day, sharp and clear as diamonds; the snow is crusted like finest marble; I shall drive myself, it's no sleighing at all without that. Come and look at the cockle-shell."

"Nothing of the kind," cried Laura, laughing, and hurrying on her pelisse with its rich sable linings; while Hannah Arnold stood by holding a white beaver hat, from which a long feather floated. "You will spend no such idle

time, Mr. Arnold. I have captured the cutter, put Peter in charge, and we are to have the first drive. Where is your great-coat? Come, hurry, for the enemy is growing desperate."

"But I intended to have a long drive with Miss Hannah Arnold," said Paul.

"Plenty of time," cried his sister. "Why, Hannah isn't half ready. We can drive across the hills, and over to the Falls and back, while she braids her hair. Can't we, Hannah, dear?"

"Yes, indeed, I couldn't go quite yet," said Hannah, smothering a little sigh; "after they get home, perhaps, if mother should not want me."

"Of course your mother won't think of wanting you, she never does want anybody when it's inconvenient, the darling soul! Come, Mr. Arnold, don't you hear that dash of bells, it makes my blood tingle from head to foot."

"Here I am at command, fair lady," cried Arnold, coming down stairs with a dashing overcoat on, and a richly mounted whip in his hand. "If we are to rob Mr. Paul of his ride, let us make a dash; Hannah, a pair of overshoes for Miss de Montreuil."

Hannah brought the oversocks, and Arnold bent to one knee while he buried the shapely little foot up with its satin slipper in the fur lining.

"Now we are ready," she cried, settling her foot in its warm nest, and tying the broad, pink strings of her hat. "Ah, this is like Canada, bright, frosty, and cold. Never fear, Paul, we won't be gone forever."

Away she went down the yard, and out of the front gate, where Peter stood before a dashing cutter crowded richly with furs, holding a spirited little black horse that pawed the white snow, and, tossing his saucy head, made the bells ring out with a wonderful clash every few moments, for the exuberant oxygen set him crazy to be in motion.

In sprang Laura de Montreuil, laughing a pretty defiance to her brother and Hannah, who stood rather ruefully on the door step watching these proceedings.

Arnold followed, drew her close to his side, with a pressure of the arm that made the breath tremble on her lip—gathered the furs lovingly about her and took up the reins.

A plunge, an exultant leap, that made the strings and strings of bells upon the harness ring out *such* a peal, and away.

"He—he—ki-e-e!"

It was Hagar and Dan at the gate yelling like mad. Arnold looked back. With a dexterous bend of the hand his horse was forced into

a sweeping curve, and back came the cutter making a superb halt.

"What is it, Hagar?" cried the young man, holding his steed in with both hands—"what's the trouble?"

"You went an' forgot der foot-stove, Massa Benedict," cried Hagar, rushing through the gate with the stove held up high in her hand, while she blew the embers within till her face looked like an India-rubber ball that never could collapse. "Jes yer put her feets on this ere, an' they'll be like two biscuits in de oven, dey will now, I tell ye."

Arnold gave his whip a crack that almost took Hagar's kerchief from her head, touched his horse and away again, leaving Hagar so lost in astonishment, that she had no power to unpurse her mouth till the cutter was dashing along the road again.

"Let 'em go," said Hagar, looking all her indignation at Dan; "dem things nebber come to no good. Go a sleighing without a foot-stove, them's company manners, am they? Nebber mind, I'll keep de coals hot for Miss Hannah, an' her sleigh-ride'll be just as 'spectable if de pink ribbins, and de white plumes, and de red shawls, ain't a flying out berhind. Thar now, as I've 'spressed my mind, jes carry that stove inter the kitchen, and set it on de hearth, Dan, if thar's life enough in yer."

Dan took the stove meekly enough; for as he had made up his mind to gossip a little with Peter before going in, the arrangement was rather comfortable than otherwise.

But this state of things did not last long. Hagar soon came pottering down to the gate and carried Dan away; while she insinuated to Peter that a back-log was wanted in the kitchen fire-place, and that it took two men—if neither of them was over smart—to roll one from the wood-pile to the nice bed of ashes that she'd just raked out for it.

Peter took the hint, and directly both negroes were discussing church matters before a splendid fire, whose foundations had been properly laid by themselves, and whose superstructure Hagar was completing with pine knots, as they debated these weighty matters in her presence.

The house was very quiet after this. Mrs. Arnold had crept up the back stairs, carrying a plate of toast and cup of tea, with which she had disappeared into the chamber we have seen before to-day; and, Hannah, not knowing what else to do, entertained the young Frenchman in the out-room, who, after all, did not seem so very much disappointed about the sleigh-ride as one might have supposed.

What did they talk of there in that dim, old-fashioned room, into which the sunshine came so goldenly, playing over the tall andirons, and melting so richly into the more ruddy glow of the hickory fire? Indeed I cannot tell you! Something very pleasant at first, if you might judge by the soft glow on that young cheek, and the smile that mellowed upon her lip like ripeness in a strawberry; but this was while Paul was talking so cheerfully, saying all sorts of pretty things with one of the most musical voices in the world, trifling with his shy, little bird without ruffling its plumage.

But after awhile, when solitude made him bold—when he began to talk so earnestly, so passionately, as she had never heard him talk before, Hannah grew frightened, and yet fascinated. She longed to run away and find her mother, but would not have gone for the world: nay, she trembled at the very idea of her mother's step on the stairs, yet was tempted to call aloud for her every instant. Then she began to grow very pale and solemn; her lips trembled as if some one had grieved her. It was altogether a curious study, that sweet face, as it glided away into the shadiest corner of the out-room, but never could be entirely alone, for another face followed her everywhere, and would, poor girl! forever and ever to the end of her life.

CHAPTER VII.

"WHERE on earth are you driving to, Mr. Arnold?"

"Into the town. I wish to show you the view from some of those terraces, it is peculiarly fine."

"Town!" cried the lady, with a pretty scream, "town! when you know I detest the very sight of a house that isn't built of logs. No—no, I am dying to see the Falls, that we only got a glimpse of the other day: it was for that I stole Paul's horse and kidnapped you."

Arnold tried to say something of the happiness of a captivity like that: but some annoyance distorted the words on his lips, and he said rather sharply,

"Indeed, mademoiselle, you will find the road rough, and the Falls frozen to marble."

"That is exactly what I want—a good jolting—jumpers all along the road, as you call those ridges, that shake one up so; and if you like, an overturn in the snow, if one does not plunge too deep. Now don't talk of roads to me. I like obstacles and difficulties, or how should I ever endure you, the most cross-

grained, obstinate person in the world, every one says."

"But I hope you will not say so, Laura."

"Laura!"

"Have I offended?"

"I don't know—yes, of course."

She blushed scarlet under his glance, for she felt that her own headlong encouragement had kindled the audacity burning there.

"Oh! if I only had a right—if every glance at that face were not a presumption."

She looked up, softened by the humility of his speech, but still dissatisfied by the tones of his voice.

"Why do you speak of presumption? It is no great crime to forget strict proprieties for once," she said, gently.

"The word—yes, you might forgive that—but—but the feelings, the burning imprudence here—who will forgive that?"

He waited a moment expecting her to speak, but she was looking out upon the glittering snow-crust, while her cheeks glowed like ripe peaches.

"You will not say one word to reassure me," he said, sloping his head to feast upon her blushes, as a rapacious child devours fruit.

She laughed, half nervously, half in pretty defiance of her own feelings.

"I should not fancy that you required reassuring, Arnold."

"No; doubtless you scoff at the audacity of a farmer's son claiming a right to possess feelings where so much wealth and beauty are concerned. I have exposed the barrenness of my antecedents—taken you into the bosom of my family. Do you scorn me for the plainness that seems like poverty to one like you?"

"You know that I do not scorn you for anything—least of all for what I have seen in your home," she said, with feeling.

"But you are rich, very rich, I dare say; of gentle blood, too, and that means so much in foreign countries; yours is an old name, a proud family; while I—what on earth do I possess which can bring me on an equality in any one point with you?"

"It is not for me to point out your advantages, Mr. Arnold; but all the possessions you point out are things in which I have no claim to merit. What is good blood but an accident, over which we have no control? Or of wealth, which comes from the past without merit or exertion? All that relates to you as a man, or me as a woman, you have left out: thought, energy, feeling, all that makes up life and honor."

Laura was greatly agitated as she said this. The color flashed in and out of her face like gleams of lightning; her lips grew bright with the words that passed them. He could feel her form vibrate amid the furs.

She had answered his question—twice answered it—and now he had no desire to press the conversation farther: this was neither the time nor place. She was rich—she loved him, this brilliant, stately creature—what could the ambition of man ask for more?

She was listening with parted lips, her very soul was thirsty for the answer which her generosity should have brought; but he only said, very softly, and with a humility that charmed, while it disappointed her,

“Oh! if I dared—if I only dared!”

The blood burned in her cheek now, the very snow-flakes melted into tears of shame as they fell upon its hot crimson, every word she had uttered stung her like a disgrace. Was he modestly retreating now that she had gone so far? She clenched the little hand in her lap till the grasp pained her; she bit her lips till they glowed like wounded coral; and at last dashed her little foot down into the bottom of the sleigh in a paroxysm of self-censure.

“What is the matter? Have I wearied you with my slow driving?” asked her companion, with tender deference.

“Yes—yes—no, it is not that; you will persist in driving the wrong way. I wish to see the Falls—I will see the Falls.”

“But——”

“I will not listen to a but—here give me the lines and the whip, I know how to drive. You won’t; oh! very well. If you do not turn toward the Falls, I will get out and walk there, nothing can prevent that.”

The young French girl said this with great satisfaction, for her spirit was all in revolt. She longed to do something hateful, to perpetrate an act of despotism which would convince him how very little her heart had been in the whole conversation. The coquetry of her impulsive nature came out in force then. She was glad that there was some one thing which he seemed reluctant to undertake. Her desire to see the Falls flamed into a passion. She would go. It was what had brought her from New Haven, nothing else could have induced her to take so long a journey on the very edge of winter.

Arnold listened with a curve of the lip that might mean wounded pride, might be audacious self-confidence. But he turned his horse and drove toward the Yantic Falls without a word.

“The youth is father to the man.” Benedict Arnold was not a person to be taken unawares, even at that early age. Of all places in the world, he would have shunned the Yantic Falls and its neighborhood, had the choice been left to him; but the willful girl at his side had doomed him, and on toward that romantic pass they dashed, he too restless for silence, and she exactly in that state of mind when wit flashes like chain lightning from the heart of a woman wounded in her pride.

You never saw a more beautiful creature than that young French girl appeared, as they swept through the frosty air, along that line of shimmering snow, listening to the bells as if they had been bursts of martial music, her face all one glow of roses; her eyes bright as diamonds; and her heart swelling with a storm of angry shame. Arnold could hardly maintain his cautious reserve as he glanced toward her.

But he would not commit himself farther, at least in that dangerous neighborhood. If she would go to the Yantic Falls, it should be with a burning heart. His was cold enough, at any rate.

CHAPTER VIII.

MEANTIME Amy Leonard had spent a night that she could never think of after without a pang of self-pity that made her thrill from head to foot. So young, so helpless, with no friend on earth to confide in, what could she do? There was a little loft in her father’s cabin, over which the roof of heavy slabs shelved low and unevenly. Here her bed was made, and here she had slept through many a stormy night, defiant of the wind that whistled through the rudely jointed logs, and laughing in her sleep as the snow floated in light drifts over the healthy roses of her cheek.

Cold and shivering, pale as the snow that still clung to her dress, she awoke from the death of her trance. She heard her father and mother breathing in the deep, sweet sleep which springs from toil, in the next room; but the very tranquillity of their slumber made her heart ache with new pain. She felt like a thief who had crept there to plunder them of all wholesome rest in the hereafter.

It had seemed guilt enough to be Benedict Arnold’s wife in secret, and without the sanction of his parents and hers; but now—now if what he told her was true—if he was indeed the villain he had so flippantly proclaimed himself—if she—that thought! The poor little quivering hands stole up to her face, the very remembrance of what she might be seemed to brazen

it with shame. Would she ever dare look any one in the eyes? Was the foul assertion true?

The poor child was maddened as she thought, how many months she had waited and waited, not daring to write—too timid for a question—waited in anguish and in silence for the first news of his coming. He had been, and there she was left, with all that cold pain gnawing at her heart—with all that hot infamy burning on her forehead. She climbed up the step-ladder to her little loft, and, shivering through and through with cold, crept into bed.

When that was done, for one moment she felt safe, and a little hysterical laugh died away under the thick coverlets. But the very sound frightened her till she gasped painfully, and drew down the clothes, struggling for breath. A dash of fine snow, which came with a gust of wind through a crevice overhead, revived her. But what was she to do? Where could she find a friend? Was it not better to die?

She remembered the look of the water between the logs, as she and Arnold went down into the saw-mill that night—how cold and quiet it seemed, with gleams of moonlight stealing in here and there. Just before she fainted, a thought had seized her to take a single step and end it. The water was very deep under those timbers, her father had cautioned her about it many a time—so deep, that when the ice was thick on the stream below, a poor frozen body might float and float under the hard crystal for weeks, and no one guess that anything but sawdust or drift-wood had harbored there.

Amy rose up in bed. Why should she wait for the shame which was sure to come? If he loved her no longer—if he really wanted to get rid of her, and had said those cruel, cruel things only to break her heart, why struggle for anything more? She were far better dead than alive—safer, and oh! how far happier.

Ah me! it is one thing to wish for death, and another to find the courage to seek it in those dark, cruel places, where suicide skulks and lures the lost soul on. Cold as she was—terribly as her poor heart ached, Amy was afraid of the very dark, and grew pale as death when the loud rush of the river met her unmuffled ear. She could feel the waters creeping round her like a winding-sheet, curling in and out of her hair, cold and serpent-like. Not there, not thus, where her father won his daily bread with such hard toil, could she die. Her kind, good father, who loved her so—would he not rather keep her with him, shamed and broken-hearted as she was, than find her down yonder?

She was beginning to feel a little comforted

by this thought, when above the sound of the Fall came the heavy roar of far off winds in the forest, and the deep sigh of the pine trees nearer, answering each other mournfully; and they seemed to say, "No, no, never again—never again!" and to all this the cataract sent up an eternal chorus, that seemed afar off and inexpressibly solemn.

As Amy listened, her cold hands folded themselves over her bosom with a gesture of unutterable helplessness, she sunk back upon her pillow quiet as despair. Thus dumb and still, she was rocked into slumber, and the daylight found her cold and weary as when she crept up to bed.

Amy heard her father up, and about the room below, but she had no courage to move. His heavy tread on the floor, the vigorous energy with which he raked out the ashes, and flung a heavy back-log into the fire-place, made her shrink and shiver like a frightened child. Then came the sound of her mother's voice, soft, drowsy, and kind, as she had heard it every morning of her life.

For the first time that drowsy softness frightened the young girl. A few hours had made that kind, common-place mother something to be afraid of—a judge before whose sleepy blue eyes hers must forever sink in shame. Amy began to cry—very softly, for she was afraid to make the least sound lest they should hear it through the loose boards and question her. As she lay holding her breath, her father's voice rose cheerily from the door.

"Now, mother, is there anything else? I have filled the kettle and built you a rousing fire."

"Yes, Joshua, cut down a link or two of sassaengers from the pole, I ain't tall enough to reach 'em. That's right, man, I'll slice up the potatoes, and have breakfast on the table in no time. Just go to the ladder and call Amy."

"Oh! let the gal sleep, she don't have a beau every night. I couldn't say as much of her mother, when a young feller of my acquaintance used to be about—she was alers on hand."

"But she didn't let her old mother get the breakfast, though, or I reckon Mrs. Josh Leonard would a thought twice about it. But go along to the saw-mill, I'll hang a cloth out when breakfast's ready."

Amy heard her father close the door with some cheerful rejoinder, and, turning upon her pillow, began to weep afresh. It seemed as if her heart must break up there all alone. How could they talk so cheerfully, and about her too, as if nothing had happened?

Mrs. Leonard had spread her snowy bird's-eye table-cloth on the pine table, and was busy

superintending a half dozen little mounds of embers raked out in front of the great hickory wood fire, on which her meal was in a state of progress. On one glowing mound a coffee-pot, with a broad, conical lid, was emitting a rich aromatic steam that penetrated the whole room; another was crowned by an iron skillet, from which came an appetizing smell of fried cabbage. In front of the fire, an iron spider stood upright, holding a golden cake of Indian corn, which was just beginning to brown deliciously, while Mrs. Leonard was busy with the sausages in her frying-pan, which she shook up and turned over, and pressed on all sides with her knife, till their flavor was enough of itself to satisfy a tolerably hungry man.

After all, Mrs. Leonard was rather a comely woman when seen in her natural element at the fire-side. I wish you could have beheld her, that morning, in the blaze of that rousing fire, turning the sausages, stirring up the potatoes, letting a little steam off the cabbage, and lifting the lid of the coffee-pot with the flat blade of her knife, just to see if it was likely to boil over.

With all this she found time to arrange the plate of golden butter, fill a saucer with applesauce, and have the blue and white cups in order, as if she had possessed fifty hands instead of that hard working pair, which never seemed as if they could be overtaxed.

Did I say she was a comely woman? Better than that, I hope. A good housewife and a kind mother cannot well be otherwise than comely, though her features were carved from an oak knot; but Mrs. Leonard had a soft, racy sort of beauty about her, which was home-like and pleasant to look upon. Perhaps it had compensated with Joshua for the want of more brilliant properties, and reconciled his sharp intellect to the slowness of hers. At any rate, they got along beautifully together, and no one who saw Mrs. Leonard, as she is before us now, ever thought to wonder at it. When she took the lead in conversation it was another thing altogether. But Joshua seldom knew that she was talking at such times, any more than he remembered the perpetual rush of the Falls above his saw-mill, for one said about as much in reality as the other.

You might have wondered how any one could be afraid of that nice housewife, in her tidy cap, her corn-colored short-gown and petticoat, with those calf skin shoes laced so snugly over her blue yarn stockings, for a more genial, kindly lady could not well be imagined. She looked up from the cloud of savory steam, and smiled like the sun in a mist, as Amy came down from

her loft: smiled down upon the simmering coffee-pot, and the brown Indian cake, for she had a matronly sort of reserve toward her daughter, and would not, for the world, have met her with one broad look that morning. She remembered the days too well when she had to come down to the family breakfast, after the stout man down at the saw-mill had been obliged to go home by starlight from her father's door.

It was well for Amy that her mother possessed these womanly feelings, for I am sure she must have grown quite dizzy and fainted, or burst into tears if the good mother had looked earnestly, when her pale face appeared, with its wild, shadowy eyes, and that wretched look.

"That's right, Amy, up bright and early without calling; just put a towel out of the window for par, and help me get the breakfast up. Bring a trencher for the corn cake, and get the armed-chair for him; snapping morning out-of-doors, I can tell you. Oh! here he comes, stamping the snow off on the door stone. Take hold of the table, Amy—not that end; there now, just a little nearer the fire. Here, take my place by the coffee-pot, it's warmer, and you look so shivery."

Amy took the seat which placed her back to the door just as her father came in, with his face as fresh and red as an April morning, from the washing he had just given it in the snow.

"There's a clean towel on the roller," cried Mrs. Leonard, pointing behind the door. "What a way you have of taking a wash in the snow, Joshua!" and she stood smiling by, while he buried his face in the voluminous crash, and rubbed his arms down with vigor, as if he had been currying the fore legs of a pony.

"All right now, any way," he said, rolling down the sleeves of his shirt and buttoning the wristbands. "Ha, Amy, up and waiting—that's right, gal. Now we can eat our breakfast comfortably."

Amy gave him one frightened look and busied herself with the coffee. Leonard caught the look, and his face changed.

"Darter," he said, lifting the hot corn cake from its plate, and breaking it slowly between his hands, while a rich fog stole out from the golden clefts—"darter, what's the matter with you since day afore yesterday? Mother been cross, or anything?"

"Mother been cross! Oh! Joshua," cried Mrs. Leonard, "now did you ever, as if I——"

"Well, well; but Amy looks pale. Come, come, gal—oh! ha, I remember now, a lover's quarrel. Never mind, Amy, them things always come right: don't they, old woman? But that

young fellow mustn't carry his head too high in this neighborhood; I'm beginning to think it's time to be a looking after you both. Why how long is it, mother, since he began coming to the Falls? nigh on two years, I reckon."

Mrs. Leonard saw by the disturbed face of her child that the conversation pained her, and, with unusual tact, put the subject aside.

"I declare, father, you're too bad; I wonder how you'd liked it. Just as if we wanted to get rid of our own child. I say now it's scandalous."

"But I tell you, mother, the gal is getting sickly; I've seen it ever since she came from New Haven," cried Leonard, earnestly.

"No, father, no. I am quite, quite well; but in the winter time it's a little lonesome up here."

"So it is, gal—so it is. Mother, we should a thought of that."

"Sartinly," said Mrs. Leonard. "The child hasn't been to an apple-cut or a sleigh-ride nor nothing in a hull year, I do believe."

"And there was Ben Arnold out sleigh-riding with a whole lot of 'em, yesterday. I say, Amy, what does that young feller mean by it?"

"Nothing—nothing, father," cried Amy, breathlessly; "they are visitors, you know, of course. How could he help it?"

"And leave you here to cry them eyes out?"

"Oh! father, it's you that makes me cry."

"There, Joshua, you've done it, and I hope you'll be content. It's a-lers jest so. I really do wish the men folks would mind their own business."

"Well, well, mother, break off short and I won't say another word; only get some yerbs and roots to make bitters of, and give her something strong every morning. I won't see that peaked look in her face any longer."

After the breakfast things were cleared away, Amy sat down to her sewing by the window, while Mrs. Leonard took out her flax wheel, and soon filled the cabin with its bee-like hum. There was little conversation between the two: the mother was troubled with a vague idea that something was going wrong with her child, but forbore to question her, from an instinct of womanliness far stronger than her reason; and Amy was buried in her own thoughts.

The sound of the saw-mill, harsh and grating above the dash of the Falls, seemed a fit melody for her thoughts, where all was discord.

At last her mother spoke.

"Amy, supposing you make some warm ginger cider, and carry it down to par in the mill; he must be orful cold with the wind a-whistling down stream like that?"

Amy started up with a faint cry, for the very sound of her mother's voice made her nervous. The cider was soon seething and casting up waves of yeasty foam over the brown earthen mug, in which she thrust the red-hot fire-irons.

Then she put on a scarlet cardinal belonging to her mother, drew the hood over her face, and went down to the mill, unconscious of her own picturesque beauty, as she picked her steps through the snow, holding the frothy cider in one hand, and lifting up her skirt of blue pressed home-made with the other.

Just as she had crossed the road and was gaining the embankment to the mill, the distant jingle of sleigh-bells made her start. She stood a moment, looking wildly along the road, and then gave a leap down the bank and ran into the mill, where she stood, panting and breathless, till Joshua Leonard came and took the mug from her hand.

"Why, gal, you are shaking with the cold," he said, sitting down on the log through which a long upright saw was gnawing its sure way, and taking a deep draft of the cider. "Run home, run back to the house, I say. It was a kind thought, and I'm mighty glad of the drink; but you are freezing, poor baby!"

"No, father, it is only the fright—only coming down the bank so fast, I meant to say. Let me just step behind this pile of boards out of the wind, and mother's cloak will keep me warm enough."

"Well, well, but take care of the loose floor, if a plank tips you'll never see your old father again, only as he'd be after you sartinly, for what would the old chap be without his darter?"

As he spoke, the good man shook the now half cold drink around in his mug and drained it off, with a deep, hearty breath, leaving a ridge of ginger on his upper lip, as he took the empty vessel away from his mouth.

"That's something worth while on a cold day," he muttered, wiping his mouth with his hand. "Lord a mercy, how much comfort there is in this world, arter all! No one that hasn't had a darter like Amy now can tell how much the gal's worth her weight in gold."

At that instant, Amy was standing a little way off, with one hand pressed hard against her heart, and her pale lips slowly dividing, like a statue frozen before its position was attained. Her head was a little bent, and her wild eyes looked away down the road. There was no motion in the girl's bosom. The very beating of her heart was hushed as she listened to the swelling discordance of sleigh-bells coming up the road.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)